

T H E
Double Disappointment;

OR, THE
H I S T O R Y
O F
CHARLES MARLOW.

In a Series of LETTERS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

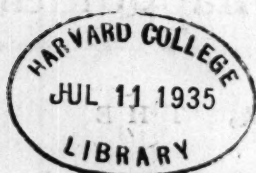
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CHARLES MARSHALL

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I

LONDON

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MCCCLXXIV

T H E
H I S T O R Y
O F
M A R L O W.

L E T T E R XLVI.

Miss HASTINGS to Mrs. SAUNDERS.

WHAT a poor, weak, irresolute creature is your Sophia! No sooner had I told my aunt that I would dispose of myself agreeably to her wishes (with which intelligence she hurried to Sir Anthony, who soon poured out his acknowledgements

Vol. II.

B

ledgements

ledgements at my feet) than I repented of what I had done; and in a short time afterwards I heard that Mr. Marlow was taken dangerously ill.

Lady Cooper, coming to us, informed me that he was seized with a violent fever.

I could not bear to hear any more—I burst into tears, and went hastily out of the room.

Sir Anthony sent two or three times to know how I did, for I could not think of coming down; and, what is still worse, I cannot bring myself to endure the thoughts of marrying at all. I just now acquainted my aunt with the present situation of my mind, in answer to her intreaties in Sir Anthony's favour. I told her I should only expose myself by appearing before

fore him, as I could not hide my emotions. " I cannot see Sir Anthony at all (continued I, concealing my face with my handkerchief) I am very sorry I have given him any hopes : it is impossible for me to think of marrying him, or any body."

Upon this she grew quite angry, and said I had not only treated Sir Anthony very ill, but made a fool of *her* also, by pretending to accept of him, and then declaring I would not ; adding, that I was either the most capricious creature in the world, or that I had reasons for my conduct, which, when discovered, (which could not be long hid) would render me an object of general contempt. " In consequence of being generally despised, (added she) you will lose your character, and the loss of that must of course be attended with self-reproaches destructive of your peace ; and all for

a man who has refused you; who has not only grossly affronted you by so doing, but doubled the affront by refusing you for a woman who had behaved in the most infamous manner, and who was, since Mr. Marlow's being taken ill, gone from Hillf-down, either with, or after, Sir George Dalton."

This last information alarmed me extremely, as I thought that Mr. Marlow's disorder would be increased by the desertion of his wife, at a time when he most wanted the tender assistance of an affectionate companion. The charge of capriciousness on his account, with the addition of a worse insinuation, had thrown me into confusion: I was now so anxious about his safety, that I could no way conceal it: I desired earnestly to know who took care of him in the absence of

of Mrs. Marlow, whose departure from him had, I supposed, occasioned his illness.

My aunt replied, "So far from being out of order in consequence of Mrs. Marlow's departure, he knows nothing about it."

Conceive, my dear Henrietta, how much my disquiet was increased by this reply. How very indiscreet, how particularly unkind, is Mrs. Marlow's behaviour just at this time! I confess I am afflicted beyond description at the treatment which Mr. Marlow meets with. I cannot think of Sir Anthony; I can only think of *him*. In vain does Mrs. Scott tell me, that people will say I am either in love with Mr. Marlow, or mad, or perhaps both.

I tell her in return, that people must say as they please; that I, de-

signedly, offend nobody; that, if they chuse to asperse me falsely, I must live in such a manner as to confute their calumnies; and that I cannot imagine my feeling compassion for a person in distress, especially for such a man as Mr. Marlow in distress, cruelly treated by his father, cruelly deceived by his wife, any reproach to my understanding, or my character.

In my last conversation with Mrs. Scott, I told her plainly, that, with regard to Sir Anthony, I had tried to like him, and found it quite out of my power to like him in the manner he might have reason to expect; that I had an high opinion of his merit; but that, as I could not be sensible of the affection for him which he discovered for me, I judged it much better for us both to give up all thoughts of a marriage which would, most probably, make us both miserable.

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She replied, " You *might* be happy, if you would give over trifling with a man who merits a very different behaviour from you."

In answer to this affirmation, I said, " I will not trifle any longer with Sir Anthony ; and I am sorry if I have done any thing to displease him : he is a man whom I desire to oblige. I wish, very sincerely, that I could love him ; but as I am become more and more averse to marriage every day, I am now determined to remain single."

" Yes, (answered Mrs. Scott, with an ironical tone) you determine to remain single, that you may be at liberty to encourage Mr. Marlow."

I assured her, that I had no such intention, and that, did I know where to find Mrs. Marlow, I would certainly

persuade her to return to her husband, and then I would never see him again.—“ It is hard, however, (continued I) that Mr. Marlow’s father will not yet forgive a fault which has brought the severest punishment with it: very hard is it, that he should be abandoned by every body !”

She made no answer, but left me to my own reflexions, which were far from being pleasing to me, as it is impossible for me to act agreeably to my inclination, without giving offence, without subjecting myself to censure. Yet, notwithstanding all that has been said, and though I am convinced that I must never look upon Mr. Marlow in any other light than that of a friend, I may still endeavour to serve him by writing to Sir Charles, and letting him know the situation of his son ; letting him know how much he wants not only his

pardon,

pardon, but the comfort of his parental society, deserted as he is by every friend, and wholly left to the care of servants.

Sir William, indeed, and Lady Cooper, call now and then ; but what consolation can he derive from their most friendly assiduities, equal to that which he would receive from the constant attendance, and tender care, of an affectionate wife ; from the company of a fond father ; nay, even from the visits of such a friend as he would find—were she at liberty to attend him—in

Your

SOPHIA HASTINGS?

LETTER XLVII.

Sir CHA. MARLOW to Mr. BRETTON.

LAST night, as soon as I came home, John gave me a letter. By the superscription I knew it came from Miss Hastings. I opened it in a hurry, supposing it related to my son, but did not in the least imagine that the contents would have been so affecting as I found them. They informed me that my son lay dangerously ill with a fever, that Mrs. Marlow had left him, that he consequently had nobody to take care of him, and that nothing would so effectually relieve him as my coming down to see him, and granting him that

that forgiveness after which he had sighed so long in vain. In short, there was never a more striking picture of distress and despair than that painted by this amiable girl, whom my son rashly refused. Every word came, I am sure, from a heart which felt exceedingly for him; and every word was a kind of reproach to *me* for my neglect of a son who never offended me, but in the unfortunate attachment to a woman whose ungrateful behaviour had made him sufficiently sensible of the error he had committed, and punished him for it severely.

In consequence of this affecting letter I ordered my chaise to be ready early the next morning. I then set out for Hillsgate, and arrived there between twelve and one, at the house my son had taken.

Going

Going directly into the parlour, I had the servant acquaint his master, as soon as he saw a proper opportunity, with my arrival; and to tell him that I would come up and see him.

The fellow, a clever one, discovered a great regard for my son, and flew to obey my commands.

In about half an hour he returned, and informed me, that he had broke the news of my arrival gradually to his master, that he received the intelligence with the greatest joy, and that he wished to see me.

In compliance with this information I went up immediately—I found my poor Charles exceedingly ill indeed; quite weak and low: he expressed the greatest satisfaction, however, at the sight of me, yet appeared very much embarrassed, and attempted to
make

make some apology for his conduct. I desired him to be silent upon that head till he was better, as I did not think him in a condition either to support a long conversation, or a conversation that would be likely to affect him: I told him I would refer that subject to another opportunity.

“ All I now wish (continued I) is to see you perfectly recovered—Finding you are attended only by servants, I am come down to keep you company, and to see that proper care is taken of you, having been informed of the uncomfortableness of your situation in a letter from Miss Hastings.”

During the first part of my speech he seized my hands, pressed them to his lips, and bathed them with his tears. When I mentioned Sophia, he shook all over, as if he had been in an ague fit: his colour changed, and
he

he sunk down upon the pillow from which he had raised himself, exclaiming—"Did she! did Miss Hastings interest herself in my recovery?"—Then, after a deep sigh, and a little pause, he added—"But she is too good for me; she is an angel."

"She is, (replied I) you know, Charles, I always told you so."

He sighed again still more deeply—"Would to heaven (said he) I had thought of her as I do now! Had I so thought of her, what a deal of trouble should we, both of us, have escaped!"

"You are right," answered I; that was all my reply. Seeing him, however, greatly disturbed, I desired him not to think any more of what was past, but to compose himself to sleep: but I found that what I had said had
raised

raised a tumult in his mind, which would not suffer him to think of rest. He continued, indeed, to talk in such ecstatic terms of Sophia, that I began most heartily to wish I had never articulated her name. The expressions he made use of concerning her came very improperly from the mouth of a man married to another. Yet I could not bring myself to quarrel with Charles, as much as I disapproved of his effusions, for liking the woman with whom I so long wished him to fall in love. I therefore only requested him, repeatedly, to keep himself quiet; to try to sleep.

With these requests I left him in order to wait on Miss Hastings, who certainly deserved my thanks for the intelligence she had sent me about my son, whose life might have been lost for want of the care, for want of the
the

the kind and proper attention, of his friends.

Miss Hastings, as soon as she saw me, blushed like a new-blown rose, and afterwards expressed the greatest pleasure at having been instrumental to the affording Charles every kind of consolation; but she appeared, I thought, disappointed at my saying little about him. I deemed it most prudent indeed to say little about him. There is, I see plainly, a mutual inclination between them, which ought not on any account to be encouraged, as they cannot now be united. How unfortunate is it that this prepossession in each other's favour did not commence before my son's unhappy infatuation for the undeserving creature whom he married, and who left him in the height of his disorder, without even telling him that she was going, without discovering the slightest concern

concern for him! This undeserving woman ordered a post-chaise to be hired for her on the third day of his illness, and went away without bidding him adieu: nor do the servants know where she is gone; they only conclude, from the orders given the boy to take the London road, that her route was to the capital.

What a thoughtless creature, or rather what an unfeeling one, must *she* be, to leave a man of whom she lately pretended to be so fond; who raised her from nothing, and who, probably, never would have thought so well of Sophia, had *she* not, by flirting with other men, and entirely neglecting *him*, given him the greatest reason to be dissatisfied with her, and to make a comparison between her and Miss Hastings, by no means to her advantage! What an insensible monster must she be, to desert the man who ventured

to

to disoblige an indulgent father upon her account; to fly from the man who chose her, with all her failings, in preference to an amiable woman without a single fault! But such is the strength of fancy! such the weakness of reason!—To desert him at a time too when he most stood in need of her assistance and tender attention about him! But it is unnecessary to dwell upon what cannot be undone. My first care must be to endeavour to restore my poor sick penitent to the health which he enjoyed, before the vexation he has indured, in consequence of his wife's bad conduct and his own indiscreet choice of her, brought him into his present pitiable condition. How much anxiety has he given, how much uneasiness does he still give, to

Your sincere friend,

CHARLES MARLOW!

LETTER XLVIII.

Mrs. MARLOW to Miss JENNER.

New Bond-Street.

YOU will be surprised to see from whence this letter is dated; but my situation became intolerable. Mr. Marlow, always dull and out of humour, fell sick at last, or pretended to be indisposed; so that, had I staid at Hillsgown, I must have been closely confined to his room, as I could not have gone to Sir William Cooper's without being told of my indiscretion by my Lady—without hearing something I should not like.

I very much question, indeed, whether I should have been admitted there
at

at all, as the whole family, I thought, began to look shy upon me, except Sir George Dalton, the warmth of whose friendship increased with the coolness of *their* behaviour. However, as I could not decently see him either abroad or at home, I determined to come to town, and take lodgings where I might live as I liked, seeing no possibility of living with Mr. Marlow in a manner agreeable to my wishes.

Immediately upon my arrival in London, I applied to my millener, and she recommended me to the house from which I date this letter.

I intend to write to Mr. Marlow, to let him know what I have done, to tell him that Hillsgown is so melancholy a place I am quite tired of it, and to desire him to come to be here as soon as he is well, and stay

stay here till we can get a house in London, for I hate the country.

I had not been a couple of hours in my new apartments before Sir George Dalton sent up his name: but though I am pleased with him, and still more with his following me, I shall be upon my guard, lest Mr. Marlow, or any of his friends, should surprise us; for, though I care not a farthing for Mr. Marlow, I should be very sorry to put it in his power to get a divorce, and prevent my enjoying the title with him.

Sir George, I am pretty sure, would not marry me, were I at liberty tomorrow: I shall therefore take care of myself, and not lose the opportunity I have gained of making my fortune. But then, as I chuse to enjoy as I go, now is the time, while I am young
and

and handsome; it is time enough to be shut up when there is no enjoyment left for us. We must necessarily grow old, and consequently ugly: I shall therefore make the most of my youth, and take every pleasure within my reach.

Had I staid with Mr. Marlow, I could not have done him any sort of good, as I dare say my company is now not less disagreeable to him than his is to me. He is more sorry than sick, I believe; sorry for having married me: he has found Miss Hastings to be more suitable to his taste. I really wonder at the assurance of men, to complain of our being inconstant: they are themselves the most capricious beings in the universe; they will not indulge us in the most trifling deviations from the severe rules they have, with their profound wisdom, thought

thought proper to lay down for us :
but surely they ought not to blame
us when we leap over the bounds
they have fixed for our conduct, and
follow their licentious examples. I
can only add, that

I am ever your's,

CLARA MARLOW.

LET.

LETTER XLIX.

Mr. MARLOW to Col. ASCOT.

AFTER having been confined above ten days with a fever, occasioned by the disturbance of my mind on Miss Hastings's account, being alarmed at the thoughts of her marrying Sir Anthony, I now find myself recovering; and my recovery is entirely owing to the care which *she* has taken of me; to the concern which she has expressed for me: her care alone, indeed, has saved me; for had she not wrote to my father to let him know I was ill, who came down immediately to see me, I must have been quite left to servants, as Mrs. Marlow removed herself soon after I was indisposed.

disposed. But *her* removal was of very little consequence, as I had much better have died than have seen Miss Hastings Lady Luther. But how can I call her by *that* name? How can I think she should ever bear *that* name? She has not, I believe, any such intention at present; at least, my father tells me so, who sees her very often: yet, how she came to *change* her intentions, I cannot tell. They will not let me talk; my father, when he wants to persuade me to any thing, makes use of Sophia's name, which has such a charm in it, that it can oblige me to any thing in a moment. They will not let me write neither: I can only add, therefore, that

I am ever your

CHARLES MARLOW.

L E T T E R L.

Sir CHARLES MARLOW to Mr.
BRETTON.

MY dear Charles is, I thank heaven, quite out of danger. To increase my satisfaction, he is become my son again: he sees his past errors so clearly, and laments his past follies with so much energy and sincerity, that I cannot any longer withhold either my pardon, or my affection, from him. His eyes are now opened, and he beholds the woman he chose, and the woman whom he rejected, in their true colours. Would to heaven he had sooner so beheld them! Sophia, the amiable Sophia, might then have been my

my daughter! Yet, I will not give up all hopes of this event. Mrs. Marlow—how unworthy of that name has she proved herself!—Mrs. Marlow may become so dissolute as to give Charles an opportunity to get rid of her for ever; and then Miss Hastings—who will not now, I think, marry any body, as she believes she cannot have my son—will, most probably, make us all happy.

My son will, I am sure, be transported to find himself at liberty to make so eligible a change; to be separated from the woman who actually drew him in for her own convenience; to be united to her who would sacrifice every thing to render him happy. We know but little at present of Mrs. Marlow; we only know that she has taken lodgings in Bond-Street: from *them* she had the assurance to write to her husband, to tell him

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that she could not endure the country ; to desire him to come and stay with her, till they could meet with a house in London to their mind.

It is a short, ill-written letter, in a bad hand, and a worse style : it seems, indeed, to have been penned by a servant, or some low-bred person : there are no marks to distinguish the woman of education in it.

Charles, who is heartily sorry for what he has done, and who now willingly lets me see that he is so, showed it to me, making the same remarks upon it which I have done, and asking at the same time my advice. I told him, that I thought it was best for him to let his undeserving wife alone.—“ Let her alone, Charles, (added I) give her rope enough, according to the old saying, and she will do her business.” He sighed, and

and forced a smile of approbation into his face, (I believe he is very much hurt at finding himself so deceived) and said he would act entirely as I would have him. Time, I hope, will restore his mind to the tranquillity which it enjoyed before he knew this woman, who so scandalously imposed upon him: time will also, I hope—but let me stop here—perhaps I cannot proceed without impropriety. I may certainly wish happiness to my son; but I must not, I am very sensible—I ought not to wish misery to any individual, in order to obtain it. Still more inexcusable should I be, were I to do any thing to make *this woman* more culpable than she has already been. I can never approve of her; but I may, at least, let her alone: that is all she can expect from

Your's, &c.

CHARLES MARLOW.

L E T T E R L I.

Mr. MARLOW to Col. ASCOT.

WHAT felicity should I now enjoy, my dear Ascot, could I but obliterate *one* action of my life; could I but do what many a man as earnestly wishes to accomplish—as vainly wishes as myself! could I but untie the knot by which I have bound myself to a woman whom I can never love, who will not even let me esteem her! But why do I talk of *her*, when the angelic Sophia honours me with her attention, and blesses me with her friendship?

Sophia has been to visit my father twice since my confinement. Let me suppose,

suppose, that the favour was designed for *me*, as *he* could call upon her whenever he pleased. You may imagine with what transport I received her: I was almost deprived of my senses, through a joy which I hardly dared to discover in the degree I felt it, lest she should be offended at the warmth of my effusions.

As I now flatter myself that I have gained her esteem, I am particularly careful to do nothing to lose it. I am, indeed, anxiously desirous of improving it; and *think* so much about improving it, that I am afraid I shall not succeed so well as if I *thought* less concerning it. My apprehensions, my terrors, I may say, are so great, lest a word, or only a look, of mine should displease her, should lessen the good opinion she has conceived of me, that I believe I make myself far less agreeable than I should otherwise

be. What a mortifying idea is this to a man who wishes to be as much beloved as he loves ! who doats, to distraction, on a woman who, as she is herself adorned with every virtue, and every grace, cannot esteem—the must despise—the man who is not equally accomplished : still more must she despise him who does not possess those excellent qualifications which shine in her with so much lustre. But had I all the merit I am so anxious to obtain ; had I every attractive charm to win and - keep her heart ; yet still my not being at liberty to address her, and, what is worse, the certainty that it is an insult, circumstanced as I am, to offer to pretend to her, damps every rising joy which I should otherwise feel at the consideration she shows for me ; and makes me behave more like an idiot than a man of sense—than a man who ought to have a more elevated understanding

standing than ordinary to appear in any degree suitable to her. Instead of this, I appear as if I had hardly common sense: my tongue falters when I would speak to her; my eyes grow dim while I gaze upon her; and, if I accidentally touch her, I feel a tremor through my whole frame. Yesterday she was so divinely good as to come and take her tea with my father, for it is to him alone she apparently pays her visits.

While we were sitting all three together—I listening with inexpressible eagerness to every syllable she uttered—my soul seemed to hang upon her lips. I rose, the servant being out of the room by accident, to take her cup. It happened, some how, that my fingers touched hers. The sudden contact had so violent an effect upon my nerves, that I had not the power of holding my cup; it fell instantly

to the ground, and the fall so alarmed Sophia, that she turned pale, and sat down hastily in her chair, looking quite frightened.

Shocked at seeing her change colour, and ashamed of my own awkwardness, I began to beg pardon for my stupidity, though, in fact, what happened was in consequence of a very different sensation—excess of sensibility.

The amiable cause of my awkward behaviour seemed no less affected than myself; and her emotions upon the occasion did not in the least tend to restore me to my former firmness—I have, indeed, no firmness at this present time, though it would be just, now highly necessary.

Mrs. Marlow has taken lodgings in Bond-street: from those lodgings she has informed me, that she intends to stay

stay in them, as she cannot endure the country. Let her stay where she will, so it be at a distance from *me*. Yet I ought not to let her remain there: I ought to exert my authority, and oblige her to return to me. I ought not, by my silence with regard to her, to connive at her giving way to dissipation, and all kinds of irregularity. It is certainly my duty, and it *should be* my care, to prevent, if possible, her leading a dissolute life: but I find myself so entirely enervated by my passion for Sophia, which increases every hour, that I am incapable of every thing. Do not despise me: pity, rather, the weakness of

Your friend,

CHARLES MARLOW.

L E T.

LETTER LII.

Miss HASTINGS to Mrs. SAUNDERS.

DO not chide me, my dear Henrietta, for my behaviour; do not condemn a conduct that is not intentionally blameable: if you *do*, however, I must submit to it. The sincere joy which I feel in seeing Mr. Marlow out of danger, will enable me to support your reproofs. However, though he is undoubtedly a great deal better, he is far from being well: the neglect of Mrs. Marlow has affected, and must continue to affect him extremely.

What a cruel disappointment has he met with so early in life! a disappointment he has so little deserved,
that

that he had so little reason to expect! Young, handsome, good, and possessed of every accomplishment to please, he had great reason to hope for, to expect, to be sure indeed of a constant return of that affection which he lavished upon Mrs. Marlow, who had still much more binding ties to engage her to be faithful to him, to be affectionate—the ties of gratitude and duty: yet they have not availed; and he sees himself, in the bloom of life, deserted by a woman who owes every thing to him; a woman, to whose tenderest esteem, to whose unremitting attention to please him, and to make him happy, he had the justest claim. How much, therefore, does he require the company and assistance of his friends, to raise him from despair, to relieve his mind labouring under disappointed love, and the want of that social delight which no man ever can feel after marriage, if he is not united

to

to a companion who is of an affectionate disposition, and who has a taste for domestic felicity !

I am exceedingly glad that Sir Charles continues at Hillsgown. His company, and returning kindness, must be very considerable consolations to Mr. Marlow. He has also gained over my aunt Scott, who was at first extremely averse to keeping open an intercourse with them ; entirely, I believe, on my account : but, as I have continually assured her that she need not be afraid of me, and that by declining any farther connections with Sir Charles she must give him reason to entertain strange suspicions of me, she now permits me to visit *him* at Hillsgown ; but she frequently accompanies me : and what is still more surprising, you will say, Sir Anthony Luther is also sometimes of our party. It is usual indeed with gentlemen who
have

have had their offers rejected, to break off immediately all acquaintance with the family: yet *we* have acted in another manner. On Sir Anthony's earnestly soliciting to be received as a friend, since I could not accept of him in a more tender character; I, with Mrs. Scott's approbation, told him, that I thought I could not better repay the compliment which he had made me, in desiring to spend his fortune and his life with me, than by endeavouring to deserve the friendship with which he honoured me. Thus you see we have at last found out the art of conciliating all parties. Could I but see Mr. Marlow restored to his former ease and chearfulness, I should very gladly subscribe myself,

Your contented friend,

SOPHIA HASTINGS.

LETTER LIII.

Sir CHA. MARLOW to Mr. BRETTON.

MY son's health seems to be almost re-established ; but the uneasiness of mind under which he labours, occasioned by his imprudent marriage, will not, I fear, be quickly removed, though Miss Hastings tries with the most unwearied assiduity to console him for the neglect of *her*, who ought to spend every hour of her life in making him happy, by amusing him ; and by her varied amusements prevent the reflections, which lie uppermost in his mind, from disturbing him. Yet I question whether she

she would not, by the removal of *one* disquieting reflection, give birth to another still more hardly to be supported. I think I observe every hour an increase of admiration, of affection, on his side. How can it possibly be otherwise, when so lovely an object as Sophia is perpetually before him, exhibiting the various graces of her person and manner, and joining to all the graces which can adorn the female sex, a tenderness the most seducing to be conceived! yet she behaves with the most winning simplicity, as if she was quite ignorant of her own attractions, of her powers of alluring: how unlike is she to many, many women, who without half *her* merit are vain, affected, capricious! Is it possible to forbear admiring a form so very delicate, so innocently attractive!—Poor Charles! how he came not to be struck with it at first; how he came
not

not to be captivated with such a person, with such a *character*, is to me amazing. But he is sensible of all her beauties now, and a very miserable poor fellow he is. I never saw any person so far gone in love. He strives, indeed, to hide his passion, I plainly perceive; yet it breaks forth, in spite of all his caution to suppress it; and he frequently looks full of confusion, full of vexation. How earnestly do I wish that he may have it in his power to make himself happy with Sophia! The way Mrs. Marlow is in must certainly forward this desirable event—It may be some time first. I have made the most diligent enquiry after her, and cannot find that she has yet been *alone* with Sir George: she has always some of her acquaintance in the room while he is with her. I dare say, however, she will not always behave
with

with so much circumspection. When she becomes unguarded, we may get rid of her for ever. In the mean while Charles suffers extremely, in his present state of suspense, from the uncertainty of his ever being happy with Miss Hastings, and also from his apprehension, lest he should give her any displeasure by discovering a passion with which she cannot but be offended, were it shown in its true colours, and of which I must *appear* ignorant. We have, therefore, difficult parts to act : however, if things should turn out agreeably to our wishes, we shall not regret what is past. Yet I think some means should be used to reclaim Mrs. Marlow : it is a duty we owe ourselves as well as her : she ought not to be lost merely for want of care : I believe, indeed, that all the care in the world will prove ineffectual ; but we shall not be excusable if we do not our endeavours,

endeavours, though almost sure of being unsuccessful. Would my son's fate were once decided!—A state of suspense is far from being agreeable either to *him*, or to

Your sincere friend,

CHARLES MARLOW.

LET.

LETTER LIV.

Mr. MARLOW to Col. ASCOT.

I Retract what I said in my last. It cannot be a weakness, it is an honour, it is a virtue, to admire, to revere, so lovely, so excellent a creature as Miss Hastings. Yet I am so inconsistent, that I cannot bear to see any other man look upon her, nor think of her, in the manner I do; and though I know that she has refused Sir Anthony, I am jealous of his speaking to her, or casting a single glance on her. I must, at the same time, allow that she merits universal admiration. I almost hate myself for feelings which I dare not venture to declare; feelings which I do not, however,

however, wish to suppress. What a wretch am I become!

To increase my disquiet, 'I have received an answer from Clara, to whom I wrote to insist upon her returning to Hillsgate, and consenting to live with me in the place which would be most conducive to my health, and suitable to my circumstances; plainly telling her, that her disobedience would produce a final separation between us. In this answer she informs me, that she is very willing to live with me in London, or in any place where she may see her old friends, and keep up her old acquaintance; but that she always hated the country, especially at the present time of year; adding, that, as the country mopes her to death, she will on no account come near it. We must therefore be separated; for I cannot

cannot think of leaving this place, nor can I support her in all her expences; extravagancies I may justly say, in consequence of her attachment to a mode of life, which, though very fashionable, is also very foolish. Could she but think like Sophia, she would be best pleased with what best suited *me*; there might then be some hopes of peace. As for happiness, *that* is flown for ever from your friend, who would be guilty of the absurdities he condemns in others, did he not detest vice and folly—did he not adore sense and virtue. Since then it has been my fault, as well as my misfortune, to refuse a woman who is a pattern for her sex, and to chuse one who is in every respect unworthy of my love, through ignorance of her real disposition, I shall be mad indeed to comply with all her demands, to humour her in all her expensive fancies.—No!—if she will not conform
to

to what is reasonable, we must part for ever—I am quite ready.

I have spoke to my father, and he does not disapprove of taking such measures, provided I first talk with Mrs. Marlow, and see if I can prevail on her to live with me where, and in what manner, I think best for us both. For this purpose I am to set out for London, and bring her down with me; that is, if she will come. I dare say she will *not* come; however, I must make the trial, it seems. Possibly, while I am gone, Sir Anthony will persuade Miss Hastings to be his—There is distraction in the thought. I cannot bear it. But if I do not put it in my wife's power to return; if I do not endeavour to make a reformation in her disposition, all her future indiscretions will be laid to my charge; I shall be deemed answerable for her failings, and blamed for

for her faults. People will say—what will not people say?—that by neglect I have made her desperate, if I abandon her.

When all my efforts to reclaim her prove ineffectual, I shall then think myself quite at liberty to do what I please, to live as I like, and to trouble myself no more about her. I may then devote every hour of my life to Sophia; I may be permitted to cultivate the friendship with which she honours me, even though she should marry Sir Anthony, which heaven forbid!—That idea is insupportable.—I can only add, that

I am, as usual,

Your's, &c.

CHARLES MARLOW.

LETTER LV.

From the SAME to the SAME.

I Returned last night from London, where I left my fine Lady resolved to go on exactly in the same way she has been in for some time. She happened to be at home when I arrived at her lodgings; but I saw plainly that I was by no means a welcome visitor. She forced a smile into her face, and affected to receive me with a laughing kind of satisfaction, which did not seem to promise any amendment. Her appearance and behaviour gave me no reason to
imagine,

imagine, that she had sincerely repented of her past conduct, or that she intended to make any alteration in it: she discovered a sneering kind of levity in her carriage, which was thoroughly provoking; and when I complained, in the gentlest terms, of her having left me at a time when I was dangerously ill, when I most wanted her care, she replied, "That she could have been of very little service to me, and that she knew her company would not have been agreeable to me." I told her that I thought I had given her the strongest proofs to the contrary, having risked the loss of so kind a father's approbation and affection for *her* sake, at the time I married her.

"I suppose (said she) you liked me when you married me; but you are exceedingly changed since."

“ So are *you*. (replied I); but if you will return with me to Hillsdown, and be content to live agreeably to my plan, you will find me the man I was.”

In answer to this, she told me, that she thought she had as much right to chuse *her* way of living, as I had to chuse *mine*; and that she had not married me to be a slave, but to enjoy more happiness than she had done, hoping I would have shared her pleasures.—“ However, (continued she) since you are not disposed to partake of them, since you have no taste for them, I must enjoy them by myself.”

The manner in which she pronounced the few concluding words, and the idea of selfishness they conveyed, made me reply with more sharpness than I should have otherwise

wife done. She answered with additional asperity, and her answer forced expressions from me, for the utterance of which I was afterwards sorry, as they totally precluded all hopes of a reconciliation, at that time at least. I cautioned her, however, to take care of herself, that she might not, by her inattention to her health, destroy my parental wishes.

Gracious heaven! should I have an heir born of a woman whose conduct I cannot approve!—And if she brings me a daughter, I shall tremble lest she should resemble her mother.—How much is to be apprehended from a connexion with such a woman as Clara! Why did I not think of that before I married her? It is now too late—Repentance closely follows indiscretion—Yet, all the disagreeable consequences resulting from this

imprudent alliance, are mere trifles compared with what I feel when I reflect upon the loss I have sustained by losing Sophia. There!—there!—my heart is rent asunder, and no relief can be afforded to

Your most unhappy friend,

CHARLES MARLOW.

L E T.

LETTER LVI.

Mrs. MARLOW to Miss JENNER.

I Had a visitor last night, quite an unexpected one, I assure you; Mr. Marlow himself. I did not think he was well enough to come to town. What do you think, now, was his business? He only came to ask me to go back to Hilldown; but I was not so simple as to go. Did he imagine that I could find no better amusement than to see him sit and look at Sophia Hastings? I can amuse myself, I think, in a much more agreeable manner. He has given me free liberty to take my pleasure, by pleasing himself in his own way: he may be assured that

I shall follow his example. I gave him a specimen of my intentions, by going out in consequence of an appointment I had made with Sir George Dalton.

I was dressing when Mr. Marlow came in, and just staid to exchange a few *matrimonial expressions* with him—we were both in high humour for a *conjugal conversation*. He was come, very much against his inclination, I dare say, to ask me to return to Hillsdown, and I was interrupted in the midst of my preparations for dressing. That interruption threw me, you may believe, into the most *obliging* temper in the world: of course, there could not but be the greatest *harmony* between us. I have sometimes thought that I shine at repartee, though I do not apprehend that Mr. Marlow was of this opinion at our last meeting. I was, indeed,
mighty

mighty indifferent about *his* opinion. I was to be at the play in the evening, and therefore told Mr. Marlow that I could not waste my time in talking, as I should not be ready for Lady Titup, who was to call on me at half past six.

He looked disappointed, but said, that he thought I might have spared him one hour, at least, of my company, after having been so long absent from him, especially as he had not for whole days, whole weeks, given me any trouble.

I replied, that it might be so, adding, that I did not believe he had the smallest desire to be with me at any time; and very deliberately walked up stairs, leaving him to enjoy his own reflections. Every one in their own way, child. I have a right to indulge myself, as

well as he, while I keep within certain bounds; and within such bounds you may be sure I shall keep, for my own sake; by so doing I shall plague my gentleman pretty handsomely. How glad would he be of an opportunity to get rid of me! I should be a fine fool to put it into his power to marry Sophia Hastings. He wants me, I know, to ruin myself; but I shall disappoint him. He bid me take care of myself too: but I dare say he would be very well pleased to have no child, especially a son, by me, to inherit a title which he wishes to descend to a son by Miss Hastings. I think, however, I have as good a constitution as she; I fancy I have a better. Now, my living will vex both Sophia and Marlow heartily, and it may, perhaps, shorten their days: I would not have the latter die before his father; he may then follow

follow him as soon as he chuses.
 When once I am possessed of the
 title, and that part of his fortune
 which he cannot leave from me, I
 shall be upon a footing with, I shall
 be superior to, those who have turned
 up their noses at me. This will
 give the highest delight to your

Affectionate

CLARA MARLOW.

LET.

LETTER LVII.

Sir CHARLES MARLOW to Mr.
BRETTON.

MY son, agreeably to my advice, and to his own idea of rectitude, has been in London, endeavouring to bring his wife to a right sense of her duty, but without being successful. She not only persisted in continuing where she is, but was so thoughtless, or rather so determinately bad, as to leave him, in order to go and dress for the play, though she had not seen him for above a month, and had left him in a dangerous condition.

Charles

Charles tells me, and I am sure he tells me the truth, that he said every thing he could think to prevail on her to return to Hilldown: he cannot, he ought not to do more: he is, by no means, obliged to live just where *she* likes. It is her duty to comply with *his* wishes in this respect, when they are not unreasonable, or improper. Whatever my son's secret thoughts may be, he discovers none, I am certain, but what are warrantable in his situation; though I can see, at the same time, that he is cruelly tortured, by the very severe disappointment he has met with, in marrying a woman who has proved to be of so very different a disposition from that which can alone render a wife desirable.

Charles came down greatly fatigued and dispirited: he has remained

mained so ever since. I am, I assure you, very anxious about him, being afraid that so much vexation may occasion a return of his disorder, which is exceedingly dreaded by

Your sincere friend,

CHARLES MARLOW.

L E T:

LETTER LVIII.

Mr. MARLOW to Col. ASCOT.

Hilldown.

I Wrote to you as soon as I arrived here, before I had even seen Miss Hastings; but could not help hastening to Mrs. Scott's the next morning.

I found her in the parlour alone.—Upon my enquiring after her niece, she told me that she was in the garden,

Looking upon that answer as a permission to see her, I went into the garden.

I found her—good heaven!—I found her leaning in the fondest manner upon Sir Anthony's arm.

I started back at the provoking sight: I could hardly recover myself sufficiently to speak to her.

After having appeared a little disconcerted as well as myself, she disengaged herself from Sir Anthony, and holding out her hand to me, said, "You are welcome, Sir: How do you do?"

I bowed, but could not speak. I pressed the dear soft hand kindly offered to me, with a fervor I had never ventured at before, which brought blushes into those cheeks which wanted not any addition from *them* to their beauty. Her change of colour was a hint to me to quit the hand I could have detained in mine

mine for ever; animated as I was, by the transport which thrilled through my veins, at the touch of it, and desirous as I was of preventing its being seized by my rival's, who seemed, I thought, to be upon a more intimate footing with her than he had yet been.

What must be done? Should Sir Anthony be upon the apprehended footing, what must be done? I cannot support the pangs I feel in consequence of my suspicions. What must I endure, if they should be confirmed!

Sophia, indeed, quitted Sir Anthony to come to *me*; but she talked to him, nay, called to him, and asked him to gather some flowers for her. Unable to bear the happy preference, I determined to destroy it by
hastening

hastening myself to the spot where they grew, and gathering the most elegant sorts I could find, luckily, as I thought, got before my rival. My alacrity seemed to give her pleasure: she smiled most deliciously upon me, and put the flowers she received from me in her bosom. Sir Anthony advancing soon afterwards with *his* flowers, she—how were my eyes mortified!—placed them by the side of mine. Though I am not apt to be vain of my taste, I could not help thinking *my bouquet* the best chosen of the two: I fancied afterwards, however, that jealousy had blinded my judgment, and that, if Sophia had not given it a place in her bosom, I should have been very easy about it, and, possibly, have believed it better than my own. But she certainly favours this Luther: if she does not, why is he not discarded,

as

as other men have been, who have had their offers rejected? Why must *be*, of all her admirers, be retained? It makes me absolutely mad when I think of it; it deprives me of every ray of hope—Yet why should I think of hope? Can I, who am already married, who have engaged myself for life—can I dare to pretend to Sophia, to Miss Hastings, whom I refused? Where could my eyes, my ears, my understanding be, when I committed so gross a mistake? But it is past—it is done—it cannot be recalled—Remembrance drives me to distraction, and will, I fear, force me to do something, of which I shall still more severely repent. There is, however, no answering for our actions when we are deprived of our reason. Perhaps what I am going to say will make you give me up at once, and induce you to believe that I
have

have actually lost my senses : but I think it very probable that Mrs. Marlow may be at length tempted, from the importunities of Sir George, and the dissipated life she leads, to give me my liberty. How transported shall I be, to hear that I may be released from her ! With what rapture shall I then hope !—but will not my hopes be then in vain ? Will not my Sophia, at that time, be the wife of Sir Anthony ? And shall I not deserve the destruction of my hopes, for having wished the woman whom I married, the woman whom I once loved, to be guilty of a very criminal action, to enable me to marry another ? I shudder at the thought ! Into what difficulties, into what distresses, do our passions hurry us !—When they have got the reins, how hard is it for us to extricate ourselves from the dangers
with

with which they threaten us! Think-
ing perpetually of Sophia, and feeling
that it is in *her* power alone to make
me happy, how painful is the situa-
tion of

Your

CHARLES MARLOW!

M

L E T.

LETTER LIX.

From the SAME to the SAME.

MY sufferings are beyond expression. I must speak, or die.— I think I shall be easier, let her answer be what it will, when she knows that I love her; when she is assured that my repentance for having refused her has almost cost me my life. I will tell her this, and then I will say no more. I will then, by silence and submission, strive to atone for having dared to acquaint her with my adoring her. She will not surely be offended with me for what I cannot help; for a fault, if it is a fault, which I can never repair; for which I cannot be sorry; of which I cannot be ashamed.

ashamed. Should she, therefore, be
 angry with me for speaking, I shall
 have nothing to do but to die. I shall
 only cease to love her, when I cease to
 breathe: and then only shall I cease
 to subscribe myself,

Most sincerely yours,

CHARLES MARLOW.

L E T.

LETTER LX.
Colonel ASCOT to Mr. MARLOW.

THE description you have given of your situation, and particularly the resolution you have made to declare your passion to Miss Hastings, are really alarming. With regard to your determination, too much cannot be said to prevail on you to change it; though nothing, I suppose, which I write, will prevent the execution of it. Let me intreat you, however, to consider, that as you cannot marry Miss Hastings, as you are married already, you will naturally affront her by a disclosure of your passion, and must inevitably prejudice her very much against you: but lest you should think this only

my

my whim, I have permission from Mrs. Saunders to say, that she is sure Sophia will not, as she ought not, forgive a procedure affronting both to her virtue and understanding, and that she will certainly resent a mode of behaviour, which no woman of honour can put up with. You may now do as you please. I have acquainted you with *my* sentiments on this affair, and with the sentiments also of Mrs. Saunders, who is a woman of the first sense, and has a most excellent heart. She speaks very highly of Miss Hastings at present; do not then, Charles, endeavour to lessen the woman, whom you love, in her own esteem, nor forfeit her good opinion with regard to yourself: such a conduct may be fatal to you both. We can all bear those distresses best which we do not bring upon our ourselves. But were I to write volumes, I could say nothing more to the pur-

pose: I can only earnestly persuade you to make the happiness of the lady in question the first object of your concern: by so doing you will, most probably, promote your own. This is the best advice you can receive from

Yours, sincerely,

GEORGE ASCOT.

L E T.

LETTER LXI.

Mr. MARLOW to Col. ASCOT.

IT is to no purpose to talk to me: my torments are insupportable. She will certainly marry Sir Anthony, if I cannot prevail on her, by declaring how long I have loved her, how impossible it is for me to live and see her married to another, to change her design out of compassion to me.—*I can, I must* indeed, submit to live *without* her; but to see her the wife of Sir Anthony, the wife of any man except myself—I should be driven, by such an event, to some act of desperation.

You tell me, that I shall affront both her understanding and her virtue ; you tell me, that I shall make her unhappy by declaring my passion for her. I am of a different opinion. She is too good to be angry with me for seeking to relieve the oppression under which I labour : she will, I am sure, from the extreme benevolence of her disposition, pity my distress, and endeavour, as far as discretion will permit, to remove it : nor will she be more unhappy in consequence of my telling her that I love her. Should she not like me, she will be sorry for my sufferings ; but it is not in her nature to be offended with me for what I cannot help, nor to be unhappy at my disclosing a passion, the concealment of which gives me the most exquisite torture. But I will talk to my father upon a subject so essential to my peace—I will consult *him*, and abide

abide by what *he* shall determine for me. He has ever been indulgent: would I had never given him occasion, even for a single moment, to repent of the affection which he has shown me! I should not then have been obliged to subscribe myself

Your very unhappy

CHARLES MARLOW.

LETTER LXII.

Sir CHARLES MARLOW to Mr.
BRETTON.

MY son, my poor Charles, has at length not only confessed the cause of his disquietude to me, but has declared himself no longer able to conceal it from Miss Hastings. He said indeed so much about making a discovery of it to her, that, though I could not consent to the gratification of his wish, I could not bring myself to forbid it: I was therefore silent; and I shall remain so, leaving him to act as he thinks proper. Whatever I may think about this affair, it will not be right in me to appear to countenance a proceeding which I cannot disapprove, as I really believe that his wife will, in a
very

very short time, set him quite at liberty; and then how still more severe will be his second disappointment, how much more mortified than ever will he be, to behold Miss Hastings the wife of another, when he is free to marry her! Besides, if I am not extremely mistaken, she would be very much affected by *his* disappointment: she certainly prefers him to every other man. He must therefore say what he pleases; I shall take no notice of it, if nobody mentions it to me. Time may yet be our friend in blessing my son with the most desirable of women for a wife, and, in giving me her whom I have ever wished to call daughter, make me completely happy. I am,

My dear friend,

Your's, with my usual sincerity,

CHARLES MARLOW.

LETTER LXIII.

Mr. MARLOW to Colonel ASCOT.

AFTER having determined upon opening my whole soul to Sophia; after having received no prohibition from my father to make her acquainted with my sufferings, I watched for a favourable opportunity to speak without being interrupted by the appearance of any intruder. As *I had been* alone with her often by accident, being continually going both with my father, and by myself, to Mrs. Scott's, I doubted not but that I should be so again: but it was my fate to meet with repeated mortifications; I continually found somebody with her, as if on purpose
to

to prevent my speaking. I am almost worn out with despair.

IN CONTINUATION.

I have still greater encouragement than ever to declare myself to Miss Hastings; for my father has had intelligence that Mrs. Marlow appears every where in public with Sir George Dalron, and that every body concludes, she cannot refuse him any thing, though nobody can yet bring any proof of her infidelity. However, while she flirts thus openly with him, am not I authorised to say what I please, in my turn, to any lady whom I chuse? But how can I speak to Sophia, who is so nicely delicate upon every subject? Will she not disapprove of my conduct? will she not think me too little affected with the behaviour of a woman who had so fascinated me, as to make me consent to marry her without the approbation of my father?

will she not think, since I have so soon ceased to love her, unworthy as she is, that I am naturally volatile and inconstant? will she not think such a character entirely undeserving of her, and despise me accordingly? How then, knowing that these ought to be her sentiments, how dare I venture to aspire to the possession of her? Yet, as I said before, I cannot exist in constant torture; I am resolved to speak: no man surely can be blamed, who pleads for his own life: such a privilege is allowed to every criminal; such a privilege therefore cannot be denied to

Your

CHARLES MARLOW.

L E T.

LETTER LXIV.

Miss HASTINGS to Mrs. SAUNDERS.

I Am very sensible that I have owed you a letter a great while, but I have not found myself in spirits to write: they have been exceedingly depressed at my finding Mr. Marlow still dejected to a degree beyond expression. He has entirely lost that charming vivacity which once rendered him so very entertaining: yet does he not less interest you in his favour by this change, as the languor which is diffused over his whole form excites the warmest, the tenderest compassion.

There

There was a good deal of company yesterday at Mrs. Scott's : among the rest were Sir Charles and his son : they are indeed our constant visitors.

Somebody related a melancholy tale about a gentleman, who being deserted by a lady, of whom he was once very fond, for the sake of another with twice his fortune, was so much affected by her ungenerous behaviour, that he lost his senses. As the little narrative was lengthened out with a variety of pathetic circumstances, it moved Mr. Marlow exceedingly : the tears seemed ready to start into his eyes.

On the relator's looking earnestly at him, and asking him if he was not well, he instantly replied,—“ Yes—as well as a man *can* be, who has no hopes of ever being happy with the woman whom his heart doats on.”

He

He then, immediately turning aside,
sat down by *me*.

I felt for him extremely—I would have given a great deal to have prevented the delivery of the affecting tale, occasioned by a case similar to his own—a disappointment in love. Yet I could not properly say any thing upon the subject: I could still less bear to see him made so much more unhappy than he was before; especially as the company continued to exchange their observations, and as they were all eager to give their opinions upon what had been communicated. At last, in hopes of relieving him, I rose up, and asked him if he would walk with me in the garden, telling him I thought I wanted air, in order to apologise for my quitting the room, though I proposed the leaving it merely to hinder him from being
oppressed

oppressed by a train of disagreeable reflections.

He followed me with more alacrity than I could have expected from the visible situation of his mind: but when I began to talk to him, in hopes of dispelling the gloomy ideas which the above-mentioned conversation had revived in him, he made no answer; he only sighed—A swift succession of sighs seemed to obstruct the utterance of his words.

Quite disturbed, at length, to see him so afflicted, I ventured to beg him to endeavour to forget Mrs. Marlow till she became more worthy of him.

“Mrs. Marlow!” (replied he, looking at me with a wild kind of earnestness, and repeating her name) Mrs. Marlow!”

Then,

Then, sitting down on a bench near him, he leant his head against his hand, and was silent.

By his putting himself into such an attitude, I could not but conclude, that he was taken suddenly ill again. I told him I was quite sorry to see him so much disordered, and would go and send him something to take.

Starting up immediately, and catching hold of my hands, which he grasped with an eagerness which really hurt me, he exclaimed (more agitated than I had ever yet seen him) "Stay, my Sophia—stay—I am not sick, but I am almost distracted!"

The uncommonness of this address, and the wildness of his air, added to these strange expressions, which were at the same time very affecting, both
dis-

disconcerted and grieved me. I could not tell what to make of him : I felt my face in a glow ; I withdrew my hands, though I could not bring myself to leave him, even to call for assistance. He had, indeed, assured me, that he wanted no assistance, as he was not sick ; yet I could not help thinking it necessary. I stood still, therefore, looking upon him with a concern which it was not in my power, which I wished not to conceal.

Changing, all at once, his affectionate freedom, for the most submissive respect, he said, “ Pardon me, Madam ; I hardly know what I say ; but my despair at having excited your anger is inexpressible.”

He really looked as if he felt all he had said.

“ My

"My anger, Mr. Marlow! (replied I) surely you cannot think me capable of anger? I am, indeed, truly sorry to see you so unhappy."

"I am the most unhappy of men," Miss Hastings (answered he); but your pity will relieve me: it is the only relief I sigh for."

"Sigh no more then (said I); nobody can more sincerely pity your distress than I do:"—and I am sure the tears were in my eyes while I spoke—"could I prevail on Mrs. Marlow to think as I do, (continued I) you would have no farther reason to be dissatisfied."

"Mrs. Marlow! (exclaimed he again, with great discontent)—My wife!—I thought not of her."

Was

Was ever any thing so odd! I am afraid that his head is really disordered. I began to be very much alarmed about it. Mrs. Scott and the rest of the company appearing soon afterwards, Mr. Marlow and I were prevented from being any longer by ourselves. He scarcely spoke to any body, but seemed to be in the same melancholy way. My heart actually is pained for him—What an affair was this marriage!

IN CONTINUATION.

The cause of Mr. Marlow's strange behaviour is now explained; and I declare I am quite at a loss how to conduct myself. Never any creature was so surpris'd and fluttered. Would you were here, my Henrietta! of what infinite service would your kind friendship be to me, could you but be with me at this time!

Mr.

Mr. Marlow came again this morning. I was at work at my tambour. Mrs. Scott was just gone to spend the day with Mrs. Lascelles, a very old and particular friend of her's, about three miles distant from home, to whom I seldom accompany her.

Mr. Marlow came in soon after her departure: he looked pale, and appeared to be greatly embarrassed, I thought, and not in spirits. I told him I hoped he was much better than he was the night before.

He sighed, and said, "That he should be always the same; that no language could express what he had endured since his marriage."

I replied, "I am exceedingly sorry to hear you say so; but I hope that Mrs. Marlow will reflect upon the
love

love and duty which she owes you, and make every proper return to your regard."

"Oh, no! (cried he) I think not of her: an infinitely more amiable and deserving woman is most dear to my fond heart, and engages all my attention. Were I but worthy of *her*, and in a situation to offer her *that* heart which she has for a long time had in her possession, I might hope for peace: as such a desirable event is never likely to happen, I must continue to be exquisitely wretched."

I was surprised at his talking in this manner; yet still endeavoured to comfort him.—"Since you are not so fondly attached to Mrs. Marlow (said I) as I supposed you to be, you will, I hope, bear her neglect with the greater composure; and if a reconciliation

conciliation cannot be brought about, you will, I imagine, feel less regret at being separated from her."

"The parting with her (replied he) I can never regret; but that will not set me at liberty; it will not authorise my addresses to her whom I adore. Oh! Miss Hastings, (continued he, with the greatest agitation) would you accept the heart of a man who has no hand to bestow!"

Here he stopped: his face was in an uncommon glow: he hung his head; and those eyes, which were before fixed on me with an earnestness that almost put me out of countenance, were now directed to the floor.

Finding me silent—for I was really so much disconcerted and perplexed, that I did not know what answer
to

to make—he raised his eyes again: by so doing he increased my embarrassment, and hurried me to return some kind of answer. “ I really cannot tell (said D); I cannot say any thing to it—~~I—no—I—~~”

Here I was stammering on; and I know not when I should have stopped, had he not instantly caught at what I had inadvertently let out, and exclaimed, with astonishing vivacity, while his eyes sparkled with transport—“ You cannot then say any thing against it, my Sophia— (added he, with a softness in his voice, and a pressure of my hand, which dyed my face and neck with blushes)— My Sophia will permit me to adore her.”

What answer could I now make, my dear Henrietta? I was ready to expire both with confusion and delight; for

for Mr. Marlow is the only man whom my heart ever distinguished: for *him* I was early taught to feel an affection. Conscious, however, of the extreme impropriety of his present conduct, and conscious of my own indiscretion in listening to him, I rose up in order to leave him immediately. Again, seizing my hand, which I had withdrawn from him, he cried, "Do not fly from me, Miss Hastings—do not abandon me to despair—only hear me—when you consider my situation, you will, I am sure you *must*, behold me with some degree of pity."

The plaintive tone in which he pronounced those words, and the eloquent expression in his fine intelligent eyes, deprived me of the power of giving him a harsh reply—I could not refuse him that pity which he so pathetically solicited: yet I wished to act with prudence; I therefore a
second

second time drew back my hand, and said,—“ I *do* pity you, Mr. Marlow, but—I cannot talk upon this subject—Pray let me go.”

“ You *shall* go, my Sophia—You *shall*, Madam,” (added he, resuming the respectful manner in which he had ever treated me): you shall, if possible, be made satisfied with me: only condescend to hear me.—I flatter myself that I have something to say, which will not meet with an absolute opposition from you: permit me to speak to you, Miss Hastings; I have often attempted it, but the words have died upon my tongue—Compassion seems now to have softened your gentle bosom, to have rendered you disposed to hear me—Oh! let me not be disappointed.”

I returned no answer to these intreaties, delivered with a fluttering,
and

and an eagerness, which excluded all denial; but I sat down again, though scarce knowing what I was about; loth to grant what I thought it my duty to refuse, and in a tremor which bereaved me of the power of giving my reasons for declining all future conversation upon a subject of a much too interesting nature. I was silent therefore, while he told me, that, though he appeared extremely presumptuous in talking as he had just done, he could prove, that, if Mrs. Marlow had not taken uncommon pains to make him believe she was very much in love with him, he never should have married her: “had I been then, (added he) as well acquainted with the charms of your conversation and disposition, (I only repeat his own words, Henrietta) as I am now, I should have thrown myself at your feet, and have assured you

that life would not be life without you. I may, perhaps, at present appear criminal in your eyes ; but criminal I shall not, I imagine, remain a great while in them. I shall soon, very probably, have it in my power to offer myself, and every thing in my possession, to you. Mrs. Marlow will certainly admit Sir George, or some other man, in a little time, to intimacies which must set me quite at liberty, and enable me to be blest with you. This is a most delightful consideration ; but I should have refrained from talking in this way, though I am perpetually thinking of it, had I not been dreadfully apprehensive of losing you for ever. The bare idea of seeing you married to another man has almost deprived me of my reason ; and, if I receive no encouraging answer to dissipate my terrors, my intellects will,
it

it is most likely, be quite overthrown."

He concluded with intreating me to pardon what he had said, every thing that had escaped him to offend me, as the situation of his affairs had disturbed his mind sufficiently to hinder him from acquitting himself in such a manner as to render himself acceptable to her; adding, that all his dependence was on my candour, and the well-known benevolence of my heart, which would not, he was certain, entirely condemn him, though I might disapprove the mode in which he expressed his sentiments, and the violence of those emotions which his feelings had occasioned. "I am very sensible (continued he) that it is a misfortune to have too much *feeling*: it often prevents us from giving utterance to words which might prove

very powerful, could they be touchingly articulated."

I was greatly at a loss for words, myself, I am sure, when he ceased to speak, and seemed to wait with impatience for a reply. The very expressions, which he feared would be ineffectual, were as forcible as he could have wished them to be. I was exceedingly moved by the distressfulness of his situation, but I could not remove the misery of which he complained. I pitied him most sincerely from the bottom of my heart; yet I was thoroughly convinced, at the same time, of the impropriety of either listening to him, or giving him any encouragement to believe that what he had said was agreeable to me.

After a long hesitation, during which he looked full of impatience, and I full of confusion, I replied,
" You

"You cannot but know that what you have been saying was by no means fit for *me* to hear: I am determined never to listen to you again upon the same subject. I will honestly confess, however, that I am sorry to increase the disquiet which you at present, I see plainly, endure, and wish it was in my power to administer relief: but since that is impossible, you must ascribe my leaving you entirely to the motives which I have sufficiently explained; motives which you must yourself, on recollection, approve."

Having thus spoken, I rose immediately to prevent an answer from him, hurried out of the room, and went up to my own apartment. There I sat above two whole hours before I could collect my scattered thoughts, before I could be fit to appear again, or even to write to *you*. Had you

been near me, what relief should I
have found from your friendly advice
at such a time! My spirits are *now*
so much fluttered, that I am scarcely
able to subscribe myself

Your very affectionate

SOPHIA HASTINGS.

L. E. T.

L E T T E R L X V .

Sir CHARLES MARLOW to Mr.
BRETTON.

WHAT I so much dreaded has happened: my son's fever is returned; it is fallen upon his nerves, and I fear the removal of it will not easily be effected. Into what distresses has this imprudent marriage brought us! What misery am I doomed to feel in seeing my only child pining away hourly, preyed upon by discontent, plunged into despair, at the very moment when he has most endeared himself to me by opening his whole heart, by admiring the woman whom I had always wished him to marry, and by consulting me in every thing he was about to say

or do! This openness in his behaviour naturally strengthens my affection for him; yet it is of no real service, either to him or me, at present. I cannot advise him to follow either *my* inclination or his own, without deviating from that rule of rectitude by which I have till now governed myself, and endeavoured to direct *him*. Is nothing then to be done to relieve either of us?—Nothing: and yet how hard is it for me to see an only son, a son whom any man might be proud of, labouring under difficulties which, though he may himself have, in some measure, occasioned them, might have never risen to their present height, had he not unfortunately attached himself to a woman who has proved the most deceitful of her sex, who has proved utterly unworthy of his esteem and love! Can any person blame Charles for withdrawing himself from such a woman,

woman, and transferring his affection to another who is every way deserving of it? Can any person blame him for giving his hand to the latter, should the former behave indiscreetly enough to warrant a divorce? We will imagine all this granted—Well and good—Yet we must look a little farther, and suppose—which is the case—that this truly amiable creature, the present possessor of his heart, believing him to be quite lost to her, is ready to accept of another man of merit, who earnestly wishes to be united to her.

This man, unexceptionable as he is, she would undoubtedly refuse, were there any possibility of her ever having my son.

Now there is, both in his opinion and mine, not only a possibility, but a great probability, of Mrs. Marlow's

F 5 behaving

behaving like many fashionable wives. Should she become infamous, can my Charles be charged with acting a criminal part if he endeavours to secure happiness to the lady in question, and to himself, by disclosing every secret of his bosom to her, by attempting to prevail on her to wait for him, by declaring that she alone is mistress of that heart which he hopes, ere long, to be able to offer her in the most public manner?

In this light did Charles place the affair to me, which engrosses his thoughts at present. To avoid the slightest suspicion of having given him any improper advice, I made no reply: he acted as he thought best, and opened his heart to Miss Hastings: her great delicacy would not permit her to return the answer which he, from the tenderness of his regard for her, wished to receive: he is therefore

fore again dispirited: his fever has again seized him; and if there are no hopes of his being separated, in a legal manner, from the woman who has treated him so ill, I shall despair of his recovery. How is my sorrow doubled, to know that he is destroyed by *her*, whom he had raised to a happy, an enviable situation, and who has made the most ungrateful return to his affection, by proving herself to be a woman from whom no good can be expected, from whom every thing bad may be dreaded! However, as it is Mrs. Marlow's interest to prevent a divorce, at least during *my* life, she is, though we are sufficiently convinced that her character is lost, extremely careful to hinder us from making any discoveries that may exclude her from the fortune and the title, for the enjoyment of which alone she married my son: and yet I think it will be very difficult

ficult for a woman of her turn, to act with so much vigilance, as to afford us no *ocular proofs* of her infidelity; proofs absolutely necessary for the procurement of a divorce. I had some thoughts of going to London, in order to have an eye upon her myself; but my son's returning indisposition makes me unwilling to leave him. Were Miss Hastings indeed inclined to be less scrupulous — Till she is so, I see plainly that Charles can never be happy: as there is no probability at present of so desirable a change in *her*, *his* situation gives the greatest concern to

Your sincere friend,

CHARLES MARLOW.

LET.

LETTER LXVI.

Miss HASTINGS to Mrs. SAUNDERS.

I Am exceedingly unhappy—Poor Mr. Marlow makes himself so uneasy, in consequence of Mrs. Marlow's conduct, and of his being unable to pay the wished-for attentions to *me*, that his disorder is returned. A slow nervous fever preys upon his spirits, and it will, I fear, end in a decline. How melancholy is it for me to see him pine away, without having it in my power to stretch out a friendly hand, and save him! I must not save him *Must not*, did I say? I recall the words! I will endeavour to restore him to his tran-

tranquillity, if possible, by intreating him not to abandon himself to despair, by telling him, that, were he at liberty, I would that moment promise to be his for ever. I cannot live and see him thus driven to despondence—I will no longer, from an over-acted delicacy (is it not an over-acted one?) conceal a secret from him, on the disclosure of which his happiness, his life depends—I will freely inform him, that I have ever preferred him to all his sex. Do not, however, my Henrietta, imagine that I would take such a step, without the concurrence of those who, from age and experience, are better judges of propriety than I am.

Sir Charles and Mrs. Scott were this morning shut up together for some time.

Mrs.

Mrs. Scott, when she came down into the common parlour, told me that Sir Charles had been persuading her to approve of my giving Mr. Marlow hopes of accepting his hand, whenever he had it at his own disposal,

Sir Charles, after having thanked my aunt in the warmest terms, turned to me, and requested me to do every thing, which could be done with discretion, to save the life of his only son.

Thus authorised, my dear, to act agreeably to my own wishes, I shall seize the first opportunity to endeavour to prevail on Mr. Marlow to make himself contented, by assuring him that I would be his, if he should ever be in a situation to claim the performance of my promise. There can be nothing criminal surely—nothing even imprudent—in a declaration of
this

this kind. I think, my dear friend, I am pretty well assured, indeed, that I shall go no further. Nothing, I hope, will ever seduce me from that rule, which has hitherto guided all my actions. To act in conformity to that rule, will be the perpetual study of

Your affectionate,

SOPHIA HASTINGS.

L E T.

LETTER LXVII.

Sir CHARLES MARLOW to Mr.
BRETTON.

MY hopes revive. Mrs. Scott and Miss Hastings have both at last consented to my intreaties. Sophia, with her aunt's approbation, is disposed to give my Charles all the consolation in her power. She has even consented to promise, that she will accept of him, should Mrs. Marlow by her behaviour give occasion for a divorce. I shall therefore hasten to London, and be a spy upon her conduct.

I must, however, in the first place see if the amiable Sophia's condescension

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scension is attended with any consequences favorable to my son.

Happy am I, indeed, in having succeeded so far! I will now hope that the rest of my desires may be one day gratified.

Your's most sincerely,

CHARLES MARLOW.

L E T.

LETTER LXVIII.

Mr. MARLOW to Col. ASCOT.

ASCOT!—my dear Ascot, I am the most blest of men! Sophia, the angelic Sophia, behaves no longer with her wonted reserve to your happy friend. Seeing me dissatisfied yesterday, melancholy, all over indisposed indeed, she kindly renewed her friendly concern for me: she intreated me to compose myself, to make myself easy, as she was assured that every person who esteemed me would do every thing possible to promote my felicity.

I replied, "That no body, except herself, could ensure my felicity;" adding, "Were I this moment unmarried,

married, and deprived of all hopes of *your* ever being mine, I should be little less miserable than I have been for some time."

"I hope you will never have any reason to complain of *me*, Mr. Marlow," replied the charming girl.

"I cannot complain of any thing on your side, Miss Hastings, (answered I) but your coldness, which you will not, I hope, always think it necessary to discover: it sinks too deep into my heart," (continued I) with a sigh which touched her; for rising, and coming towards me, she, with one of the sweetest smiles imaginable just gleaming over her face, said, "Have I been cold, Mr. Marlow? believe me, if I have, it was only when I thought it prudent to be so: were you in a situation to expect a different behaviour, (added she, with a blush which gave
a new

a new animation to all her features) you would not, I fancy, have reason to find fault with me."

What rapture filled my swelling bosom at this delightful condescension!

"Do you then feel something more tender than friendship for me, my Sophia?" cried I, catching her dear hands, and pressing them alternately to my lips.

"What a needless question!" (replied she, glowing with blushes, and gently withdrawing her hands)—"But say no more upon this subject, only endeavour to promote the recovery of your health, to which, I imagine, the tranquillity of your mind will not a little contribute. Think of nothing that can give you any farther disquiet, and believe me sincere, when I tell you that it pains me to refuse
you

you every innocent indulgence : but your own excellent understanding must convince you, that there is a necessity for my acting, at present, against my inclination—you would despise me, were I capable of acting otherwise."

With these words she broke from me, fearing, if I am not mistaken about her affectionate glances, to trust herself any longer with

Your transported

CHARLES MARLOW.

L E T.

LETTER LXIX.

Sir CHA. MARLOW to Mr. BRETTON.

Park-Street.

I Have not only been continually upon the watch myself since I came to town; I have also made old John (who formerly lived with me, and on whom, upon his being seized with a paralytic stroke, I settled a small annuity, that he might spend the remainder of his days in peace) hire lodgings directly opposite to Mrs. Marlow, in order to take particular notice of every motion she makes. By him I find that she keeps very irregular hours, and leads a very dissipated, if not a very dissolute, life. Sir George Dalton is still her constant

stant visitor, and I think it impossible for them to pass their time together, without passing it in a manner which, if properly discovered, will fully answer my intentions by so close an observance of her proceedings. Amply shall I be rewarded for my trouble, if my dearest son can at last, through *my* vigilance, arrive at the accomplishment of his wishes. I am going to write to him, to let him know that I have great hopes of success. In the mean time I am, as usual,

Your's,

CHARLES MARLOW.

LET.

LETTER LXX.

Miss HASTINGS to Mrs. SAUNDERS.

I Have taken up my pen with more spirit than I have done for a long time. Mr. Marlow is better: to increase the satisfaction I feel on his mending, he tells me that he owes the recovery of his health entirely to me, and that he can never enjoy the life which I have preserved, without me. What delightful sounds are these, from the lips of the man whom I was early taught to love, whom it will soon, I hope, be a virtue in me to love!

Sir Charles has wrote to Mr. Marlow, to inform him, there is the greatest

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reason

reason in the world to believe that Mrs. Marlow will soon restore him to the freedom of which she has so long deprived him. He appears almost distracted with joy at this news, and urges me to share it with him. No words can describe the pleasure I feel at seeing his health so much improved, at hearing him declare his rapture on my consideration for him; it is unutterable. What a pity is it that we may not indulge an exchange of sentiments, a mutual confession of our secret sensations, as innocent as they are delightful! Frequently do I endeavour to check the wish which prompts me to tell Mr. Marlow, how very dear he is to me; frequently do I endeavour to conceal the joy which I receive from his undisguised transports, occasioned by his being permitted to declare his passion for me. His transports are all under the correction

rection of delicacy ; yet, in the midst of all *my* chastised transports, I cannot help thinking of Mrs. Marlow with concern : I cannot help pitying her for the very great loss she will, undoubtedly, one day sustain, by being separated from a man who would have made her the happiest of wives, had she placed a proper value on him, and returned the tenderness which he, I am sure, from the nature of his disposition, lavished on her. *He* also, I am certain, must exceedingly regret a separation, however desirable her conduct may render it. Glad should I have been to have secured his heart with so considerable a drawback. But there is no perfect happiness in this world ; the little we are allowed to enjoy, cannot be expected without alloy.

I will not think of any thing disagreeable at present; I will enjoy the good while it is in my power, and try to bear the evil, when I am not able to avoid it, with all the fortitude I possibly can.

Your's, most affectionately,

SOPHIA HASTINGS.

L E T.

LETTER LXXI.

Miss MARLOW to Miss JENNER.

WOULD you believe it, Sukey? Sir Charles Marlow is come to London on purpose to watch me. He hopes, by catching me in the commission of a *violent indiscretion*, to get rid of me, and to marry his son to his favourite Sophy Hastings; but I fancy I shall be too cunning for them all. 'Tis vastly disagreeable, though, to be so very circumspect; and nothing, but the pleasure of rendering their scandalous designs upon me fruitless, could oblige me to submit to the regular life I at present lead, of which Sir George heavily complains. I am sometimes inclined

to believe, however, that this circumspection may be better for me upon the whole; a little care may be necessary, in my situation, to preserve the son which I hope to produce to vex them. — Old Marlow will be horribly mortified to have his title extinct, and a great part of his estate go out of his family, for want of a male heir, which nobody shall provide for him but myself, if I can help it. I abhor every kind of confinement; yet I am strongly induced to think, that the behaviour I am necessitated to assume to Sir George, has its use, tiresome as it may be in some respects. Most men — all men, perhaps — grow fonder, and more eager, on meeting with difficulties; on being repulsed: grant them every thing they wish for, they soon grow weary of you, and despise you probably into the bargain: but they will, I find, bear putting off, and
submit

submit to a little delay, if we have sufficient art to make them believe that it will heighten their pleasure. Delay has also this never-failing effect, it enhances the merit of our yielding. She who gives at once, and gives all at once, renders herself cheap indeed, and satiates her lover, without letting him enjoy the transports of expectation. Do you not know this, Sukey? If you do not, I will fit a moment longer to tell you, that pleasures at a distance ever appear, like objects looked at through a magnifying-glass, much greater than they really are. Who, therefore, understanding what they are about, would not contrive to give a higher zest to their enjoyments, and promote the duration of them? These arts are most diligently studied by

Your indefatigable

CLARA MARLOW.

LETTER LXXII.

Mrs. SAUNDERS to Miss HASTINGS.

EXCEEDINGLY surprised, not to say pained, was I, on reading the contents of your last letter; and could not help asking myself, if it was possible for Miss Hastings, for *my* Sophia, to think and act in the manner she has lately done, and to confess it with such an air of self-satisfaction. However, do not let me blame her for her sincerity, the only virtue, I was going to add——can you pardon me?——that my once-perfect friend has remaining. But I am too severe—I will not, I cannot suppose that Miss Hastings has given herself time to reflect upon the great indiscretion
to

—to say no more—of which she has been guilty, by permitting a married man, a man who will not, in all probability, be single again, openly to avow a passion for her, by listening to him not only with calmness, but pleasure, and by returning his passion as much as it could be decently returned—nay, my Sophia has gone so far, as to wish she could return it; though she cannot but be sensible that there is a considerable degree of indelicacy in such a wish, and a considerable want of refinement in the discovery of it. Never did I believe that Miss Hastings would have distinguished herself in such a manner—and what excuse is there for this astonishing change in the mind and manners of my once-amiable Sophia? In what way can you apologise for your conduct, but by confessing that those virtues, which had ranked you above the common

run of women, are obscured by your indulging a passion which cannot be vindicated, because it cannot (circumstanced as Mr. Marlow at present is) be prudently encouraged. It ought indeed to be stifled, to be crushed, lest the encouragement given to it should, becoming too powerful, compel you, against your will, to act in a manner that must not only make you contemptible in the eyes of your friends, but odious in your own : and when you are so contemptible, so odious, you must certainly feel an inexpressible load of anxiety : you will feel it, probably, with double force, at having it in your power to relieve it.

I have written very freely, as well as fully, upon this subject ; but as I have written only the most interesting truths, I hope *they* will be sufficient apologies. Perhaps you may wish that I had not written in so free a manner :
but

but should I have discovered the friendship I ever professed for you, which I have, indeed, ever felt for you, had I been silent when I saw you in the greatest danger? Have I not strongly proved my affection by endeavouring to make her, whom I sincerely regard, happy? And how can our actions lead to happiness, if reason and virtue are not the springs of them?

You will, perhaps, attempt to excuse yourself by saying, that Sir Charles Marlow, a man of the first understanding and reputation, not only supports you in your opinion, but encourages you to persevere in your adherence to it.

Sir Charles, it is true, is deservedly esteemed, and generally allowed to be a man of sense and character; but every impartial person must allow, that

that he is at this time so much interested in getting rid of Mrs. Marlow, whom he never liked, and in securing a wife for his son agreeable to himself, that he may be imperceptibly led, by his inclination, both to approve and carry on proceedings in no shape to be defended; proceedings, in which he would not be himself engaged upon any other occasion: he would condemn them in any other person. Sir Charles therefore must, undoubtedly, be a very improper man to apply to in this affair, as his decisions are not to be depended upon, because he wants that sort of judgement which is absolutely necessary to guide him to the point in question, in the management of which the greatest niceness is required. As to your own judgement, you cannot, certainly, depend upon *that*, as you are so entirely prepossessed in favour of Mr. Marlow. Blinded by
such

such a prepossession, it is scarcely possible for you to be fair in your determinations. That Mr. Marlow is to be pitied for having made so unfortunate a choice, I am very ready to own; but then, is he not at the same time to be blamed for having so obstinately opposed the advice of an indulgent father, who had discovered no small judgement and taste in choosing a wife for him?

Mr. Marlow has since indeed seen and felt the mistake he committed by marrying another woman: but how unavailing are the repentance he has since shewn, and the very strong inclination he has discovered for you! Already have you both suffered considerable disquiets from them. I am afraid your disquiets will not end here. I tremble to think of the difficulties, the distresses, into which you will both

both be plunged, if the intimacy between you is continued.

Who can answer for their conduct, when they are under the direction of the tenderest of all passions! of a passion which cannot be gratified in a legal manner! Consider, therefore, my dear Sophia, ere it be too late, and let me prevail on you to reflect upon the consequences of giving way to passions which grow stronger by time. Believe *me*, who tell you this out of real friendship, (I can have no other motive) and snatch yourself from an intercourse so dangerous to your reputation, and consequently to your peace. Yet, surely, there is no occasion for *me* to urge you thus warmly. Is not Mrs. Scott, your own uncle's wife, under whose care you are at present, sufficient to watch over your conduct? But she too is biassed by Sir Charles. Where then can

can a person be met with who acts entirely from principle, and who is not improperly prejudiced in somebody's favour? However, since those who ought to be your friends, who were your father's friends, give you up, be your own judge in this affair, and resolutely determine to behave like a woman of honour in every respect: by such a behaviour you will indisputably secure the applause of all worthy people, and afford the highest satisfaction to

Your faithful

HENRIETTA SAUNDERS,

L E T.

LETTER LXXIII.

Col. ASCOT to Mr. MARLOW.

HOW strangely infatuated is the man who attributes every absurd, every indiscreet, almost every cruel action, indeed, which he can commit, to the powerful operation of the most pleasing of all passions! By requiring a woman of unblemished reputation, uncensured till now, to countenance, nay to indulge, your declared tenderness for her, though you are incapable of encouraging it with honour, being married to another, you do not discover a true regard for her. He who truly loves can never wish to injure the object of his affection.

Sir

Sir Charles too, blinded by his disapprobation of Mrs. Marlow's behaviour—for Mrs. Marlow she still is—and by his desire to call Miss Hastings daughter, has been induced to act in a manner which does not redound to his credit. I am sorry to say so: but, upon such an occasion as this, the language of truth is the language which ought to be adopted. —Yes, my friend, Sir Charles has acted cruelly both with regard to Miss Hastings and to yourself. What can be more painful, to a heart of sensibility, than to see the gratification of its sweetest wishes impossible, after having fondly indulged them!

Spare then, my dear Marlow, spare your Sophia—spare yourself—for the way in which you at present proceed must necessarily doom you both to feel extremity of anguish.—Separate for ever; if you do not, the consequences

quences may be fatal. I am by no means singular in my opinion: numbers think of this affair exactly as I think; numbers know that Mrs. Marlow will always take care that no proofs of her infidelity shall appear against her. Vain, therefore, are all your hopes: and, indeed, I am not sure whether our hopes are not criminal when the ruin of those who have a right to our protection is included in the accomplishment of them.

The amiable Mrs. Saunders, who has the sincerest regard for Miss Hastings, though she has kindly promised to conquer all her scruples about a second marriage, and to determine in my favour, is so anxious on her young friend's account, so desirous of preserving her from the distress with which she seems to be threatened by your very imprudent conduct, that she declares

declares she cannot bestow a thought upon herself, till she sees her Sophia entirely freed from your persecution, and no longer in danger of being injured by the man who pretends to be so fondly attached to her. For my sake, Charles, then, if you pay no attention to your own happiness, to the happiness of Miss Hastings, quit a woman whom you cannot address with honour, and fly to

Your affectionate

GEORGE ASCOT.

L E T.

LETTER LXXIV.

Miss HASTINGS to Mrs. SAUNDERS.

I Yield, my dear Henrietta: whatever it may cost me, I yield to your discreet, your salutary, your friendly advice; entirely convinced that you have written from your heart alone, and that you can only wish to see me happy, by wishing to see me act with prudence. But how is it possible for me to be happy, knowing that Mr. Marlow can never be so; and that, if I break off all connexions with *him*, I shall render him infinitely wretched!

We ought not, however—I am very sensible we ought not to think of

of making ourselves happy at the expence of virtue and honour. We cannot indeed be so—we cannot be really satisfied with ourselves when we are conscious of having acted in opposition to every principle of rectitude.

You see, my friend, I have thoroughly studied your letter : it is, I confess, an excellent one, and has had all the effect you can wish for upon me. Yet I will be honest, and hide nothing from you : I will confess that I had two other very powerful motives to determine my change of conduct. Mrs. Marlow is, I hear, resolved, however negligent and unkind her behaviour may be, never to suffer herself to be discovered in any act of indiscretion : it will be, therefore, most candid to suppose that she is not capable of committing any. My next reason will also, I dare say, have
still

still more weight with you, as it has
 affected me so exceedingly, that I have
 been obliged to do the greatest
 violence to my own inclination: I
 have been obliged to say and do
 every thing in my power to curb
 Mr. Marlow's. It is not possible, I
 find, for me to be so much upon
 my guard, in company with a man
 confessedly very dear to me, as I ought
 to be: a favoured lover, though he
 may promise, and even design to be
 discreet, will, I perceive, be utterly
 unable to act up to his intentions.
 Mr. Marlow was, from the first mo-
 ment I cast my eyes on him, distin-
 guished by me; nay, my heart
 throbb'd in his behalf, even while
 he rejected me, and married another.
 But when I saw him pining under the
 disappointment he had met with, and
 found that he visibly preferred me
 to every body, and seem'd desirous
 of living for *me* alone, I was affected
 beyond

beyond expression to feel myself—when all hope had been over—to feel myself so tenderly beloved by the only man I had ever preferred. Flattered with the prospect of being one day happy with him, charmed, and indeed transported, to have it in my power to relieve the anxiety which I had an unsurmountable desire to remove, to soothe his care, and to contribute to his felicity, I indulged him in every decent, every reasonable liberty. But where is the man who says that he is in love, and will be contented with reasonable indulgencies? Mr. Marlow is not certainly *that* man. On the contrary, he took every advantage of my consideration for him; and shall I own, my Henrietta, covered with blushes as I am while I write, that I found it both difficult and painful to repulse him! This, and this alone, has extremely alarmed me, and made me

me, whatever uneasiness I may endure, resolve to break off an attachment which cannot be continued any longer with honour, or with safety. If I cannot trust myself, how can I trust my lover? My behaviour has been very culpable, and I am deservedly punished for it, by finding myself under a necessity, not only of tearing myself away from the man whom I——but I will not write what ought to be for ever blotted from my memory. I will endeavour to think no more of him; and in order to make it more criminal in me to think of him, I will comply with my aunt Scott's persuasions, which were always to accept of Sir Anthony, though she was prevailed upon to consent to my obliging Sir Charles, by giving hopes to Mr. Marlow. Yet even now, while I resolve to act with all possible discretion, I am thinking how I shall support Mr. Marlow's returning

returning illness. However, I am not to be guilty of a crime, to preserve the life of any man: I must therefore make a considerable effort to conquer my weakness at once, and render worthy of her Henrietta's friendship

Her ever faithful and affectionate

SOPHIA HASTINGS.

LETTER LXXIV.

Mr. MARLOW to Col. ASCOT.

WHAT a letter was your last !
 It was surely prophetic—it predicted the misery I at present experience. It has, most likely, been in a great measure the cause of it ; as I doubt not but that a copy of the same sentiments was dispatched, from *her* and *your* friend, to that dear amiable girl, who, before she was persuaded to renounce me, had promised, in the most solemn manner, to be mine the moment I was at liberty to claim her promise ; a blessing I shall now never enjoy, as she has, in spite of all my prayers, tears, and sighs, bade me

me adieu, telling me that her conscience would not suffer her any longer to continue an intercourse which was blameable in the highest degree. She even told me that she was going to give that hand, dearer to me than my life, to Sir Anthony Luther: this was too much; and I swore, if he dared to hint such a thing, I would move heaven and earth to prevent him.

As I spoke in a manner strongly expressive of my feelings, they made an impression upon her, and gained her from my rival. However, though I have carried this point, peace can never more inhabit the bosom of

Your

CHARLES MARLOW.

H 2

P. S.

P. S. You will not—you cannot, I imagine, object to Miss Hastings's remaining unmarried, if it is most agreeable to her: it would be cruel in you, indeed, to wish to deprive me of every glimpse of hope.

L E T.

L E T T E R LXXV.

Miss HASTINGS to Mrs. SAUNDERS.

THE more I reflect upon the friendly part you have taken in my affairs, the more I think myself obliged to thank you for your kind care of me.

I now see plainly that I was wrong in giving the smallest hopes to Mr. Marlow, as I certainly encouraged him, by so doing, to connive at Mrs. Marlow's continuing in a state of dissipation ; a state, which would most probably hinder her from becoming the wife he wished her to be ; the wife she perhaps would have been, had he not ceased to love her, had he not been seized with that prepos-

session in *my* favour which has served to render us both unhappy. I have been greatly to blame: I will therefore endeavour to repair what has been amiss. I will deprive Mr. Marlow of all hopes of me, by giving my hand to Sir Anthony: he will then see the necessity of his trying to make himself happy with Mrs. Marlow: he will then try to make *her* sensible of the impropriety of her conduct: he will wish to make her sensible that he loves *her* alone; and when she finds him constantly attached to her, she will, undoubtedly, on *her* side, strive to reward his affection and fidelity by living in the way he likes, and taking pains to please him. With regard to myself, I shall learn to follow the advice of my friends, and to be contented with the man who has an unblemished character, and who has, in every body's opinion, deserved my esteem.

In

In consequence of Sir Anthony's allowed merit, and unquestionable regard for me, I most surely ought to pay the greatest attention to his happiness, and studiously employ myself in rewarding his sincere attachment to me. Yet, though I agree to perform this act of justice, my heart at the same time bleeds for Mr. Marlow, who has declared that he will not see Sir Anthony renew his pretensions; but I hope that Sir Charles, who, blinded by his partiality in my favour, has gone too far by not dissuading his son from the indulgence of his wishes, will see things in a proper light, and endeavour to prevail on him to be satisfied with his lot; to think no more, in the way he does, of

Your

SOPHIA HASTINGS.

H 4

L E T-

LETTER LXXVI.

Mr. MARLOW to Col. ASCOT.

WHAT anxiety have I for some time endured, from your intermeddling in my affairs! You have now driven me to distraction. Miss Hastings has, at the instigation of *your* friend, given me up for ever. She will not see me again—she avoids me—she flies from me—nay, she will give her hand to Sir Anthony.—What a torturing idea!—It is insupportable!—I can never survive it.—I do not indeed wish to survive such a loss; a loss, which those who pretend to be my best friends have connived

at :

at; which they have forwarded, which they have brought upon me, by their ill-advised behaviour. However, all will be over soon, and you will not have it in your power to give any farther disturbance to

CHARLES MARLOW.

H 5 L E T

LETTER LXXVII.

Sir CHARLES MARLOW to Mr.
BRETTON.

IN what distresses do people involve themselves who act in opposition to the strictest principles of rectitude! My poor Charles first erred by disobediently refusing the woman whom I had always believed capable of making him happy, and by chusing one who has ill returned his partiality in her favour. The disappointment was exceedingly disagreeable to him, and particularly grating to me; and I was induced, I freely confess, by the effect which his marriage had on me, to be rather pleased with his cultivating an acquaintance with Miss Hastings;

Hastings; to be too ready to promote his growing inclination for her, as I was not without hopes that Mrs. Marlow would behave in such a manner, as to authorise his declaring the sincerest attachment to this amiable girl. The encouragement of these hopes has undone us all; for, by what I can learn from the spies whom I employed to watch over Mrs. Marlow's conduct, the eagerness which we discovered to surprise her in the actual commission of infidelity, put her upon her guard: she will, consequently, never suffer herself to be caught in a criminal situation. We know, indeed, that her carriage is infamous, though we cannot positively prove it; so that my son, not being able to live happy with her, nor being permitted to entertain hopes of finding himself in a situation to pretend to Miss Hastings (who has peremptorily insisted upon his declining all farther connexion with her;

her ; and, to dash all his expectations, is on the point of giving her hand to Sir Anthony Luther) will, I am afraid, sink under the weight of his double disappointment.

What increases my distress upon this occasion is, I have myself, by conniving at Charles's passion for Miss Hastings, and at the prepossessions he discovered in her favour, made bad worse : I have only strengthened those hopes which ought to have been crushed at once : he might then have turned his thoughts to something of a different nature, which now dwell too intensely upon a beloved object. He will now, indeed, I fear, never enjoy the full possession of his reason again.

The pursuit of a favourite point, which cannot be fairly obtained, should certainly be relinquished.

The

The longer we cherish wishes never to be gratified, the more keenly must we suffer from the disappointment. My son sees his mistake too late : I am no less sensible of my own error ; yet we can neither of us strike upon a remedy—no remedy is left for us but patience, which is not easily relished by young people ; and I confess it is not palatable to

Your afflicted, but

Sincere friend,

CHARLES MARLOW.

L E T.

LETTER LXXVIII.

Col. ASCOT to Mr. MARLOW.

HOW unjustly do you accuse me, Marlow! how injuriously do you complain of me! when it is the violence of your own passions which has led you into the train of evils now become too much for you to support. However, as I would not make any addition to your anxiety, I will not revive what cannot be remedied: I will only point out the mischiefs you might have brought upon yourself and Miss Hastings, had you persisted in continuing to feed her, as well as yourself, with the delusive hopes of having it in your power to give her your hand. The
more

more intimate your acquaintance had been with her, the longer would have been its continuance, the more painful would have been your situation. Still worse consequences might have attended your increased intimacy: it might have urged *you* to sigh for improper liberties, and *her* to make improper concessions. I do not hint this out of the least disrespect to Miss Hastings, or from a want of confidence in her discretion. She has, indeed, proved herself to be superior to most of her sex: she has shewn the tenderest pity for your distress, the greatest anxiety for your preservation: she has also made you sensible that she will *not* go farther than is warrantable by discretion, and that she has a true regard for *your* honour, as well as *her own*. You ought, therefore, rather to give her the praises which she deserves, as her discretion has certainly snatched you from the
brink

brink of a precipice to which you was hastening in the most heedless manner. You should not be offended with your friends, who have done their best to save you from evils far greater than those of which you complain: you ought to thank them in the warmest terms for their kind offices.

And now, my dear Marlow, having endeavoured to convince you that you have been in the wrong, instead of being angry with you for not seeing things with *my* eyes, let me try to prevail on you to reason with yourself, to bring yourself to think of Miss Hastings with composure. While *she* is happy, *you* ought to be satisfied; if you are not, you have not a true esteem for her: you cannot shew such an esteem for her by wishing to make her unhappy, by desiring her to abandon all hopes of felicity

felicity with another, perfectly assured that she cannot be honourably attached to yourself. No, Marlow; he who loves a woman for her own sake, can never be, while she is happy, totally miserable: at least he ought not certainly to give himself up to despair.

That you may seriously attend to every thing I have said upon this subject, and impute all I have said to the most disinterested friendship, is the sincere wish of

Your truly affectionate

GEORGE ASCOT.

L E T T

LETTER LXXIX.

Mrs. SAUNDERS to Miss HASTINGS.

THE pleasure which your last letter gave me, my dear Sophia, is not to be expressed; and yet it is no more than I expected from you. I always thought you would act in a manner consistent with that good sense I knew you to be mistress of. I am charmed to find that I am not mistaken in you, and that not even what I will allow to have been a great temptation, especially as you had the sentiments of men of understanding and character on your side, could make you swerve from that rectitude which ought ever to guide our actions. You will, I dare say, be

be rewarded for your prudence and perseverance. If Sir Anthony *should not* be quite so engaging in your eyes—a supposable, but by no means a certain case—as Mr. Marlow, a moment's reflexion will make you sensible that he cannot but be more really deserving, as he has never been guilty of disobedience to his father: and a good son, my Sophia, is most likely to make a constant, obliging husband.

The assiduity with which Sir Anthony has attended you, without discovering the least fickleness, or the least disgust at a behaviour which could not be defended at one time—But your own excellent understanding, and still more excellent disposition, my dear, have made you, no doubt, sensible of the improprieties you have committed; and you will, I dare say, act for the future in the
most

most unexceptionable manner. However, though you have made so desirable a change in your behaviour, some men, and men too whom most women would like, would have been so much displeased with some former parts of it, as never to have tried you a second time.

Sir Anthony's patience, you must own, has been sufficiently put to the trial, by your alternately receiving and rejecting his addresses; and he has certainly, by his mildness, steadiness, and uniform carriage, shewn himself worthy of your esteem, of your affection. Such men are not to be met with every day: such a man, however, I think I have found in Colonel Ascot, the sincere friend of Mr. Marlow; but not the friend of his passions, which have almost gained the mastery over him. I wish they may not be fatal to him; yet,
should

should they prove fatal to him, my Sophia, you ought not to repent of what you have done. We are not to grieve, irrationally, for events which we cannot hinder; still less can we be justified by acting inconsistently, because those whom we wish to esteem, act so. We are not to abandon ourselves to despair, because our friends have irregular desires, and are under the dominion of passions which should not upon any account be gratified. When we have said and done every thing we can think of, to persuade them to behave with discretion, we can then only pity them: we must then leave them to take the consequences of their folly. The less we think about people who are irreclaimable, the better; as we only make *ourselves* uneasy, without doing *them* any service. I hope therefore that you will, when you are united to Sir Anthony, endeavour to forget Mr. Marlow,

Marlow, who, for the future, can only be looked upon as an object of compassion: however, to administer all the relief in my power to a generous mind like yours, which sympathizes with every object in the slightest degree unhappy, you may be assured that Colonel Ascot, the first of Mr. Marlow's friends, will spare no pains to console him under every disappointment he has met with, or may meet with, and will very soon come to Hillsdown for that purpose alone.—This assurance will, I hope, give a real satisfaction to my Sophia: that it may, is the sincere wish of

Her ever affectionate

H. SAUNDERS.

L E T.

LETTER LXXX.

Mrs. MARLOW to Miss JENNER.

WELL! I have been too many
 for them at last: by persisting
 to keep up every apparent sign of
 discretion, I have at length roused
 the dragon himself, who so vigilantly
 watched me. He is gone, Sukey,
 to his son, who is, I hear, quite
 in the fullens, because Sophy Haf-
 tings, weary of waiting for my making
 myself publickly ridiculous, and in-
 creasing the number of those ladies
 who have sacrificed every thing for
 love, has very prudently resolved to
 accept of Sir Anthony Luther, after
 having kept him in play till *he*
 began to be tired, and *she* to be afraid
 —poor

—poor girl!—that she might have no husband at all. But she may happen to repent of her resolution, as I find all men will not be made tools of—I really begin to think I went too far with Mr. Marlow; that is, I carried on my designs too openly: I should have been more artful: I should have pretended that my health would not permit me to live just in the manner he chose: at least, I might have invented some excuse or other to deceive him into a better opinion of me. 'Tis mighty foolish to discover our most secret thoughts to any body, except to particular favourites: to discover them to a *husband*, is in the highest degree ridiculous: but I was so provoked at his attempting to controul me, that I lost all patience. I shall be wiser for the future; however, I need not give myself any farther trouble about any thing, as long as Miss Hastings

Hastings is going to be Lady Luther. I make no doubt but I shall be Lady Marlow by-and-by. The old man cannot live always; and as to his son, I think he will get over his illness. He will hardly die of his fever, and nobody, I believe, ever dies of love. I have no notion of it, I am sure—I love myself too much to care a straw for any body else. While the men find charms in me, I can admire them; when they overlook me, I can despise them; so we shall always be upon equal terms. Yet I shall not, I fear, for some time, be in a situation to exhibit myself in the way I wish: I dread my approaching confinement: to secure a title and fortune to my family, I would submit to be confined a week or ten days; but to be shut up a whole month—horrid!—the bare idea is insupportable to

Your

CLARA MARLOW.

VOL. II.

I

P. S.

P. S. Sir George is still as attentive to me, as if *he* expected me to give him an heir. I can assure you, however, very faithfully, that there has been no *crim. con.* between us. I am tormented to death with my mother, who has been sick ever since I left Hillsdown.

LET.

L E T T E R LXXXI.

Lady LUTHER to Mrs. SAUNDERS.

I Thank you for your kind congratulations, my dear, my real friend, for such I have ever found you; and I hope you will continue to favour me with your excellent advice, and to fortify me against any return of my former weakness; for I cannot, I own, hear of Mr. Marlow's remaining in so very indifferent a state of health, without feeling extremely for him: yet have I not a single reason to repent of my union with Sir Anthony: he expresses the greatest satisfaction at my behaviour, lavishes the highest encomiums on me, studies to oblige me in every

I 2

thing,

thing, and flies to prevent my wishes. I fear I shall be spoiled by so much indulgence, my Henrietta: but I will endeavour to be grateful to him, to you, to all my friends. May *you* meet with such a man in Colonel Ascot!— I have not seen him yet, but I hear he intends to honour me with a visit.

IN CONTINUATION.

The above-mentioned gentleman has just been here. He is very amiable, and appears to be worthy of my Henrietta. He told me, upon his entrance, that he came from you, with your permission, to pay his respects to me, and to beg me to honour him with a place in my esteem. After having listened with pleasure to the thousand kind things he said of *you*, my dear, I ventured to ask him, as I knew he came lately from Hillsgown, after Sir Charles and Mr. Marlow. He replied, that he
was

was sorry he could give but a poor account of them—"I am concerned (added he) to find my friend Charles so much disappointed in his marriage; yet I no less pity those who have brought themselves into so disagreeable a situation."—He then complimented *me*, by saying that it was Mr. Marlow's misfortune to have discovered my attractions when it was too late. I was sorry he said any thing about me: I wished to have forgot that I had been ever distinguished by Mr. Marlow; I turned the conversation therefore: I ought not to hear of, to think of, any man but Sir Anthony, who merits all the esteem and affection which it is in *my* power to bestow on him. Before the Colonel took leave, he informed me that Sir Charles, who had declared he must ever retain the greatest regard for

me, had desired my permission to wait on me, when I received the best wishes of my friends. I could not refuse a piece of such well-intended civility, from a man whom my father esteemed; yet I was not pleased at being reminded of his son. I replied, that Sir Charles Marlow could not but know that my sentiments in his favour rendered any compliment of that kind unnecessary. And now, my dear, I must tell you that I shall be heartily glad when this meeting between us is over. The apprehension of being exposed to the hearing of something, which may touch me too nearly, extremely alarms

Your affectionate

SOPHIA LUTHER.

LETTER LXXXII.

Col. ASCOT to Mrs. SAUNDERS.

AS you was so kind, Madam, at my parting from you, (which was, you are sensible, attended with no small pain on *my* side) to give me leave to write to you, upon condition that I confined myself to what related only to our two friends, I avail myself of this permission; happy in being suffered to speak to you upon any subject: I wish indeed that the subject, which at present employs my pen, could afford you more entertainment; though every thing that can be said of Lady Luther, must give the sincerest satisfaction to those who have the honour of an

I 4 acquaintance

acquaintance with her. Her person, her conversation, her manners—her conversation and manners particularly—reminded me so strongly of her charming friend, that it was impossible for me not to feel the highest admiration for her. There is one part of her character which pleases me beyond expression; the compassion which she could not help discovering for my poor friend Charles, when I mentioned him in the manner which I thought he deserved, moved me exceedingly. A pearly tear started from her eye, and stole down her cheek, ere she could stop its progress with her handkerchief. Then, as if fearful of having sympathised too tenderly with the man who certainly merits her pity, if he meets with nothing more, she blushed, delicately apprehensive of having shewn her sensibility in an improper way, and immediately spoke to me of her dear

dear Mrs. Saunders; and in terms so just, so affectionate, that I envied the delicious language in which she mentioned the most amiable woman in the world. She could not help, at the same time, being more than ever touched with poor Marlow's hard fate, who laments, in the most pathetic expressions, the loss he has sustained. I have, however, brought him, at last, to own that he not only gave Miss Hastings a very indifferent proof of his love, but did her the greatest injustice, in desiring to prevent her from being happy with another, merely from interested, from selfish motives. I have also persuaded him to go abroad: new places and company may, and I hope they will, happily restore him to the tranquillity which he enjoyed before he married. Sir Charles, who is likewise exceedingly alarmed at Lady Luther's marriage, lest it should increase his son's dis-

order, proposes to accompany him as far as Paris; but they both think they should not leave England till Mrs. Marlow is brought to bed. This delay, as well as the occasion of it, is, you may imagine, very disagreeable to my friend Charles, as Hilldown, since the marriage of Miss Hastings, is become absolutely odious to him. He will therefore remove to Park Street with Sir Charles. On his removal, I shall, of course, return to London also.

I have seen my friend depart, and will make myself happy by attending you at Windsor. You will then, I hope, in consideration of so long an absence, shorten the time of expectation, and condescend to show some indulgence to

Your ever faithful and devoted,

G. ASCOT.

LETTER LXXXIII.

Sir CHARLES MARLOW to Mr.
BRETTON.

MISS Hastings is at length married to Sir Anthony : all my hopes, therefore, are totally destroyed : my poor Charles's hopes too are for ever crushed. No longer can we expect to see her any way connected with us. This event has hurt Charles exceedingly ; and if change of place, if new amusements in different climates, are insufficient to relieve him, we must, I fear, give him up for lost. What a cutting reflexion is this ! I am yet willing, however, to believe that he may be saved by turning his thoughts to new objects. It is a pity,

pity, indeed, that we cannot make this trial immediately, as every kind of delay in such a situation as ours must be dangerous: but it is not prudent to leave Mrs. Marlow till she is brought to bed, lest she should impose a spurious heir upon us. Besides, if she has really been not culpable, decency requires that my son should pay some attention to her at such a time. Yet, I am afraid that his reflexions upon this occasion increase his disorder: glad, therefore, shall I be for him, when the delivery is over. I shall think every moment an age, indeed, till something can be done to forward the recovery of my son.

I waited on Lady Luther upon her marriage: she received me with her usual politeness and affability; yet she was, I thought, so much affected at the sight of me, as to wish I had declined

declined waiting upon her with my congratulations. I sighed in my turn on the recollection of past events, and could not take my leave without desiring her not to break off her acquaintance with me for her father's sake.

“ No, certainly, Sir Charles, (said she, unusually agitated); you were one of my first friends, and will, I hope, continue my friend.”

She then averted her face. I pressed her hand, wished her happiness, and left her.

My son, though I had not mentioned a word of having seen Lady Luther, imagining, I suppose, that I would not have quitted the country without bidding her adieu, just said, when he saw me again, “ Is Sophia happy?—I cannot

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cannot (added he) call her by any other name."

I told him, (though I was really afraid of making any answer at all, lest I might say something to disturb him still more) that I hoped she would be happy.

He sighed deeply, exclaimed—
"Heaven bless her!" and then walked away.

By this behaviour of his it is very plain, that he is greatly affected by Sophia's marriage; but his situation admits of no relief. As for me, I must endeavour to bear my lot, be it what it will; I must bear my sufferings in this world with all the fortitude in my power; yet all will, I fear, be too little for me. Never must I expect to enjoy that tranquillity

lity with which I once hoped to descend into the vale of years.

My son, my poor Charles, was my only comfort. I had flattered myself that he would have been the consolation of my old age: how cruelly have I been mistaken in him! I can taste no pleasure without him; but to see him drag out a tedious life in misery—what an insupportable sight to

Your's, &c.

CHARLES MARLOW

L E T;

ly with which I once hoped to
delight into the vale of years.

My son, my poor Charles, was my
LETTER LXXXIV.

From the SAME to the SAME.

MRS. Marlow was yesterday brought to bed of a daughter: the news was sent immediately to my son, and he went directly to see her, but returned exceedingly dissatisfied; telling me he could not by any means prevail on her to suffer the little creature to receive that nourishment from herself, which nature had designed for her; and that Mrs. Watson, who sat by her, and tried to persuade her to suckle her infant, had no better success. What an unnatural wretch! How could my Charles take such an unfeeling creature

ture to his arms?—A daughter too!
—Well!—There is no contending
with our destiny. Every thing at
present gives disgust to

Your very much dissatisfied friend,

CHARLES MARLOW.

LET.

L E T T E R LXXXV.

Col. ASCOT to Mrs. SAUNDERS.

YOUR commands must be obeyed, Madam, though they keep me at a distance from all that is dear to me.

Mrs. Marlow has got a daughter: a son would have been much more agreeable to my friends: a son might indeed have made their disappointments sit more easy upon them; an heir would have almost made Sir Charles ready to forgive all that was past, and receive Mrs. Marlow as his daughter, as he has now lost all hope of calling your fair friend by that endearing name.

Marlow,

Marlow, indeed, does not shew any discontent at the sex of the child, but a great deal at the mother's peremptorily refusing to offer it any nourishment from her own breast. I think I know enough of your gentle disposition, to be assured that you will not be offended at my confessing myself entirely of *his* opinion. How many mothers have not only destroyed the constitutions of their children, and spoilt their tempers, by giving them to nurses, from whom they, with their sustenance, have also imbibed their vicious humours of body and mind, but also injured their own health! But will you not say that this is strange language to ~~her~~ whom I am continually soliciting to give me an opportunity of becoming a happy father? You will perhaps ask me, whether a woman of education, a woman of any fashion, a woman of the world, can, without degrading herself,

herself, condescend to take upon her the mean office of a nurse to her own children? I know to whom I am writing. I am very sensible that my amiable Henrietta thinks, that the best education that can be bestowed upon a woman, let her rank in life be what it will, must necessarily be the education which renders her most fit to enjoy, and to promote the enjoyment of, domestic felicity. No woman can feel domestic happiness so strongly, as when she is endeavouring to consult the happiness of the man whom she has chosen for the partner of her life.

I am thoroughly assured, that my dear Mrs. Saunders, though formed to shine in the brightest circles, and adorned with a taste for every thing that can render her conversation enchanting, is nevertheless so little a woman of the world, that she would prefer

prefer the most retired corner of it, with a few select friends, whose society and whose sentiments were entirely agreeable to her, to a life of flutter and dissipation among a herd of beings whose time and money are squandered away in nonsense, in folly—if not in vicious pursuits.

I flatter myself, that I need not make an apology for the above sentiments, to the delivery of which I was naturally led by a *case in point*.—Now, to return to my friend: the tenderness which he has discovered for his little daughter induces me to hope that her birth may at this time be a fortunate event, rouse him from the lethargy of grief into which he has been plunged by several oppressing incidents, and restore him to his family and friends. When this restoration is but beginning to be accomplished, I hope to throw myself
at

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at your feet, and convince you, by every proof of the most ardent affection, how sincerely I am

Your faithful

GEORGE ASCOT.

P.S. I have just received the favour of your's, and with joy accept your invitation—though only for a couple of days.

L E T.

LETTER LXXXVI.

Mrs. MARLOW to Miss JENNER.

SICK, disappointed, miserable indeed beyond expression, am I; deprived of every pleasure; immured in an apartment, debarred the only satisfaction I am capable of taking, that of seeing company, or of writing to those friends who are most agreeable to me. I have, however, seized a moment, in the absence of my tormentors, to write to you, instead of sleeping; to desire you to come, if possible, and stay with me for a few days. My mother is dying, I believe; and the people about me join with Mr. Marlow in telling me, that I shall be thrown into the same condition, if I will not submit to suckle my
infant,

infant, an odious girl! had it been a boy, I should have been made some amends for the misery I have endured: but a girl—a chit to grow up just under my nose, only to draw off the attention of the men, and to put me in mind of what I *have been!*—No—Sukey—let her perish first—I will perish myself, or suffer any thing, rather than be confined, rather than appear in the indelicate character of a nurse: horrid! no—never will I give up every pleasure in life, and only to bring up a creature to rival me, and shove me out of the world, that is, out of the world of Fashion and Taste (the only world I care for) before my time. Mr. Marlow may tell me what he pleases of the propriety of acting in the manner he would have me, as the only way of procuring a reconciliation with his father; I shall not mind him, I can assure him.

Sir

Sir George is, I fancy, of a very different opinion, and would not like me the better for spoiling my shape, and neglecting my appearance. I am quite altered as it is, and look actually pale and hollow-eyed: I have got wrinkles already. You cannot think what I have gone through. My unfeeling mother joins with Mr. Marlow in wanting me to bear still more: but I never will consent to nurse the little squalling brat, let them say what they will. I married, as I have often said, to enjoy life in every respect; to dress finer, to go more into public, to purchase every thing I had a fancy for, and not to be dandling a child from morning to night. If Mr. Marlow is so fond of his girl, he may hire a wet-nurse for her. I shall on no account confine myself to the performance of so mean an office—But I hear somebody coming up, so must bid you adieu.

CLARA MARLOW.

LETTER LXXXVII.

Sir CHARLES MARLOW to Mr.
BRETTON.

I Have just begun to reconcile myself to the little stranger, who has made her appearance in my family. Upon her mother's most unnaturally refusing to suckle her daughter, a nurse was provided for her, and she was brought to see me yesterday for the first time. She seems to be a pretty little quiet creature—She shall be taken early from her mother, lest she learn any of her ways. I wish she may be, in her disposition, like my son. He is still in a spiritless condition. I was in hopes that his little girl, of whom

whom he takes more notice than I could have expected, would have helped to amuse him ; but his melancholy is immoveable. Colonel Ascot, who has been very friendly, being almost continually with him, is gone to Windsor for a day or two. My son, though he was not much relieved by his friend's society, misses him. I am afraid, indeed, that nothing but time can restore him to his former tranquillity. We are making preparations for our departure from England. We only wait to see the little Sophia settled : Charles *would* have his daughter called Sophia after Lady Luther, telling every body he so named her in compliment to *me* also, whom he had sufficiently offended by refusing her when proposed to him. 'Tis possible, however, that Lady Luther and Mrs. Marlow may be, both of them, displeased at it: the former indeed has too much good sense and

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good nature, to be offended: with regard to the latter, I am very indifferent about her. Could I see Charles tolerably easy, I must be content.

Your's, sincerely,

CHARLES MARLOW.

LET.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

Mr. MARLOW to Colonel ASCOT at
Windfor.

THOUGH your return is expected to-morrow, or next day at farthest, yet I cannot wait for your arrival, to open a heart bursting with a thousand different, disagreeable sensations. Mrs. Marlow, in consequence of her obstinately refusing to suckle her child, has been thrown into a violent fever. The physicians say that it may be attended with dangerous symptoms. Should she die now, her death would avail me nothing. Sophia, my adored Sophia, is lost to me for ever. She is come to London for the spring months; but I have not

seen her. I dare not trust myself with the sight of her, at present. Should Mrs. Marlow *not* recover, I must wait till Sir Anthony also dies—but then perhaps Sophia may reject me—*my* Sophia, did I say?—She will never be mine—I would not have her when I might, and now——oh, George! my head is exceedingly out of order.—My father, though he is very kind, hurries me to leave England: he fancies, poor man! that I shall be well when I have left a place where I have known so much disquiet; but he only deceives himself with false hopes. All places will be alike to me, as I shall carry my griefs with me wherever I go—Would to heaven I could die! but that is a blessing denied to such a wretch as I am—Little reason as I have had to wish for Mrs. Marlow's life, I would not have her die now for all I am worth in the world, lest her death should put bad thoughts

thoughts into my head: there are but too many bad ones in it already.

IN CONTINUATION.

Mrs. Marlow, though she has been exceedingly ill, is pronounced out of danger: we shall therefore leave England in a few days. I have just heard that Mrs. Walton is dead. She has been in a decline almost ever since I married. I fear Clara has much to answer for: she never was kind to her mother, who not only connived at making me believe she was violently in love with me, but instructed her how to draw me in—Clara had never a heart to give. The woman, who could make so ill a return to a mother who loved her well enough to be capable of acting contrary to honour, and the dictates of her own conscience, to make her *great*—who could be false—(I am convinced she

has been false, though the circumstances relating to her infidelity have been carefully concealed) to the man who ruined himself to marry her—the woman who refused to take her own child to her bosom, though her refusal was not only injurious to that child, but to her own health—had never a heart to bestow upon any man. Her mother, before she was deprived of her senses, confessed that she forwarded her daughter's designs on me, with a view to live in more affluence than she could otherwise hope for: she begged my pardon also on her death-bed—I sincerely forgave her—With whom have I reason to be offended, indeed, but with myself? Had I complied with my father's most earnest wishes, I should have been most happy; at present I am most miserable. I hardly know what course to take—My father continues to believe that change of place will restore me to my lost peace. How greatly is he mis-

mistaken! However, I have promised to set out with him as soon as every thing is ready for our journey to *Dover*, if *you* are with me to bid farewell to

Your

CHARLES MARLOW.

LETTER LXXXIX.

Col. ASCOT to Mr. MARLOW.

I Am sensible that you have expected me with impatience: put yourself, however, in *my* place, and you will acquit me for not having performed my promise. My Henrietta has been in the greatest trouble on her uncle's being seized with the gout in the stomach; but if he continues to mend, I shall be with you to-morrow. I have just heard a piece of intelligence, which ought, perhaps, to be concealed from you; yet, as an enemy to concealments, I must tell you that Sir Anthony Luther has been taken ill of a fever: he was thought to be in danger when my Lady wrote to

Mrs.

Mrs. Saunders, who would have come to town with me, but could not leave her uncle. She condemns me for telling you this, and says, that my intelligence will only throw your spirits into a flutter. It cannot hurt you much, I think, if it does you no good. Adieu, till we meet.

IN CONTINUATION.

My return must now be postponed till the end of the week, for reasons which I will communicate when we meet.

Yours,

GEORGE ASCOT.

L E T:

L E T T E R X C.

Mr. MARLOW to Col. ASCOT.

WHAT have you wrote to me, Ascot! Is there really a probability of Sophia's being at liberty to dispose of that hand which was once destined to be mine? What transporting information! I can tell you in return, that Clara's recovery is given up: the phyicians say it is impossible for her to live many days. Her refusal to suckle her child has certainly been the cause of her present situation—But I will say no more of her—I will think no more of her—I would, if possible, forget that I ever knew her.

Sophia,

Sophia, the dear, gentle, amiable, excellent Sophia, alone fills my mind. Should she yet ever—but I must not, dare not indulge such a charming idea—it is too great—it swells my soul to raptures inexpressible. I may be wrong, perhaps, to form such wishes; they may be criminal. The misfortune is, that, situated as I am at this time, it will be extremely difficult for me to act with the discretion requisite upon so particular, so trying an occasion. I feel myself unequal to the task: besides, my health is in so uncertain a state, that I am prevented from reflecting upon those subjects with the precision which I should otherwise do. My hand shakes to such a degree, that I can hardly hold my pen: I am compelled, therefore, to bid you adieu.

CHARLES MARLOW.

L E T T E R X C I.

Sir CHARLES MARLOW to Mr.
BRETTON.

FRESH alarms for me, my friend! indeed, I see no end of them. Mrs. Matlow died last night entirely of a fever, occasioned by the stoppage of that nutritive fluid which nature had plentifully bestowed for the support of her child, who, however, in spite of her unnatural mother's neglect, appears to resemble her father most. May she have the same tenderness of disposition which *he* has ever possessed! and then she will not be capable of acting the same part by a child of her own, as her mother acted with regard to *her*.

Mrs.

Mrs. Marlow certainly felt a sacrifice to her ambition and caprice: she could not be made sensible of her folly (to say no worse of her) till it was too late for her to make any reformation in her conduct. Let her follies be buried in oblivion.

To return to my son: he is in an agitation not to be described. Sir Anthony Luther is, it seems, dangerously ill: Charles, therefore, cannot help forming hopes that, should the former die, he may yet be happy. His hopes, I am afraid, are delusive: yet, if the indulgence of them can, in the smallest degree, give such a turn to his spirits, as to promote the re-establishment of his health, I shall think myself most happy. Yet, however strong my wishes may be for my son's recovery, I cannot reconcile myself to the disagreeable propensity we feel, to be pleased at the approach-

ing

ing dissolution of a man of merit; and a man of feeling cannot help being concerned at the necessity of owing his happiness to the distresses of another. But it is by no means certain, that Lady Luther, though she always declared a great esteem, a particular regard, indeed, for my son, will, after all that is past, supposing her at liberty, consent to be *his*. The shocks which are given to his spirits by his alarming fears, and torturing doubts, must inevitably impair his constitution: and yet, as I see a change in him for the better just now, I am willing to believe, that if there was the smallest probability of his one day possessing the object of his wishes, though on ever so distant a day, he would perfectly recover under the animating influence of hope. The best thing, therefore, which we can do, is to get him as fast as possible out of England, that he may, by a
con-

continual shifting of the scene, have his attention diverted from the great point in view, so as not to think upon it with an anxiety that may be in any shape prejudicial to him.

As soon as Colonel Ascot returns from Windsor, we must both do all we can to prevail on him to quit a place where he had endured so much affliction. Probably you will not hear from me again till I am arrived on the continent; I therefore bid you farewell now.

Your's, ever sincerely,

CHARLES MARLOW.

L E T.

LETTER XCII.

From the SAME to the SAME.

I Was quite mistaken when I imagined that I should be, ere this, at a considerable distance from home. There was no persuading Charles to go, but upon condition that I would remain in London, and promise in the most solemn manner to make it my business, if Sir Anthony died, to see Lady Luther, the moment she received company, and recommend *him* to her in the strongest terms. When I hinted to him the extreme indelicacy of such a proceeding, when I told him that such a proceeding would rather lower him in her opinion, than be of any service to him; his agitation was

was increased, and he persisted in his request. He would listen to no objections—he would not hear reason—Being thus circumstanced, I was glad to compromise matters with him. Colonel Ascot, who is now with us, takes an infinite deal of pains to make Charles a rational creature; but I see not, at present, any prospect of his ever becoming one. The Colonel thinks, with me, that the more quiet he is kept, the better: could *he* accompany Charles, I should be very well satisfied, as he was always partial to him; but, as he is on the point of marriage with a very amiable woman, a friend of Lady Luther's, I cannot expect him to leave her. The necessity there is of my son's having some person with him, remarkably tender and considerate, is obvious. If Sir Anthony should recover, the news of it may be less severely felt, communicated to him
by

by such a person. But I must resign him, though with the greatest reluctance. Intimately acquainted as you are with my heart, you can easily imagine what I feel: and you will, I am sure, pity the feelings of

Your sincere friend,

CHARLES MARLOW.

L E T.

LETTER XCIII.

Col. ASCOT to Mrs. SAUNDERS.

THOUGH I hope to be with you, my dearest Henrietta, by to-morrow evening, I cannot suffer the post to go off without writing to you; and I flatter myself, that you will not be displeased with me for telling you again—what I have often told you—that life is not life, when I am banished from her I love.

Poor Marlow left Park-Street this morning, with only his servant to attend him, as he insisted upon Sir Charles's remaining in London, to
be

be a sort of guard upon Lady Luther, in case Sir Anthony should die. The extreme rectitude of your mind will, I know, make you start at this: and certainly an eagerness to hear of the death of any person cannot be defended: yet there are some situations, in which such an eagerness may perhaps be pardonable, when all due allowances are made for the weaknesses of human nature, and for the strength of a predominant passion, especially if that passion be love. 'Tis very hard sometimes to

IN CONTINUATION.

I was interrupted by a message from Sir Charles to let me know he hears that Sir Anthony Luther is not only quite out of danger, but recovering apace. In consequence of this

this information, I hastened to him, and found him very much dejected. He told me, that he trembled for his son, lest any body should too suddenly acquaint him with a piece of news destructive to all his hopes.—“I wish” (continued he) most sincerely, that this intelligence may not reach him till his health is restored, till he is better able to bear it.”

I do not see, however, that this intelligence can be concealed from my friend: I imagine indeed, that the sooner he hears the worst, the better. Sir Charles talks of following him post to Dover, and of going with him to France, that he may watch over him with the tenderest care, and prevent any bad effects arising from his disappointment—if it can be properly called one. But I must instantly seal this, or it will be too late for the post.

post. When I have the happiness of
seeing you, I shall be able to inform
you more particularly of my restless
friend—till then I remain

Your faithfully devoted

G. Ascot.

L E T-

L E T T E R XCIV.

From the SAME to the SAME.

I Have been prevented, my dearest Henrietta, from keeping my promise, I reckoned upon, in seeing you this evening, by the sudden and unexpected return of Sir Charles Marlow, and my unhappy friend, whose life, instead of Sir Anthony Luther's, is now despaired of.

A very unlucky rencontre has happened ; and it has so disconcerted poor Marlow, that I fear he will never get over it. While he was waiting at the principal inn at Dover, for a wind to carry him over to the continent, a chaise and four drove hastily

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into

into the yard, and close by the window of the room in which he was sitting. As soon as it stopped, Sir Anthony got out of it; and giving his hand to his Lady, passed by Charles, with her, towards another room. Charles started with astonishment, and ringing the bell with all his force, summoned both the waiter and his own servant to his assistance. With a voice scarce to be heard, as his man tells the story, he asked who the gentleman and lady were, he saw get out of the chaise just arrived. The too ready waiter immediately answered, " Sir Anthony, and Lady Luther, Sir. Sir Anthony is going to the South of France for his health." This reply, though the latter part of it gave my poor friend some faint hopes, was too much for him. He sunk back in his chair, and remained, for some time, in a state of insensibility. His servant, being exceedingly alarmed, sent for a physician, and

and was going to dispatch an express to Sir Charles, who most fortunately arrived, for his son, but not for himself. He was greatly shocked at the change he perceived in his son, which he dreaded indeed when he heard of Sir Anthony's recovery: and it was *that* recovery which hurried him to Dover.

Sir Anthony, upon hearing that Sir Charles and Mr. Marlow were in the house, sent a very polite and friendly message to the former, to know how the latter did; expressing a wish also to wait on Sir Charles, when he was quite alone.

As soon as Charles was conveyed, by order of the physician, to his chamber, Sir Anthony was admitted. He spoke of Charles in the tenderest manner, and declared that he knew how to pity him for the loss of such a

L 2

wife

wife as Lady Luther, to whose care and attention he chiefly attributed his own recovery ; adding, that it was at her particular desire he was going to the South of France, as she earnestly wished to secure permanence to the enjoyment of his health. He concluded with saying, "I am going to visit France merely to oblige my dear Sophia, for I was never better in my life."

Sir Charles only bowed, and wished *him* and Lady Luther happiness wherever they went. They soon afterwards took leave of each other, and Sir Anthony, in a few hours, was under sail.

Poor Charles continued restless all the evening. When he heard in the morning that Lady Luther had sailed from Dover, he turned to Sir Charles, and desired that he might be carried to London immediately. His father
opposed

LETTER XCV.

Lady LUTHER to Mrs. SAUNDERS.

Calais.

YOU will be surpris'd, perhaps, at receiving a letter from me dated at Calais, as you probably imagin'd that I was pursuing my journey southwards: but to confess the truth, my Henrietta, I was so much affected by accidentally arriving at the inn where Mr. Marlow was waiting, and by seeing him, as I pass'd, look exceedingly ill, that I was very much disordered. Sir Anthony, fearful of worse consequences, insists upon my staying here till I am quite recovered. It was indeed to avoid hearing of,
or

or seeing, the poor unhappy Marlow, that I intreated Sir Anthony to make the tour of France. I knew I could answer for myself while I remained ignorant of his sufferings; but it was too much for me, knowing myself, in some degree, the cause of them, to be near him, and yet incapable of affording him any relief.

Sir Anthony is the most indulgent of husbands; but my duty to, my affection for *him*, cannot hinder me from feeling the sincerest compassion for Mr. Marlow.—I hear he is dead. May he enjoy that happiness, in another world, which his ill fortune denied him here! I pity Sir Charles from my heart: he was the best of fathers to the most deserving of sons. I dare not add any more at present. You have my most ardent wishes for your happiness

pinefs with the man of your choice:
in these wifhes Sir Anthony, who
fees all I write, ardently joins.

I am

My deareft Henrietta's

Truly affectionate friend,

S. LUTHER.

The E N D.

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